JOHN MARVEL ASSISTANT

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

Mrs. A. Brown

15

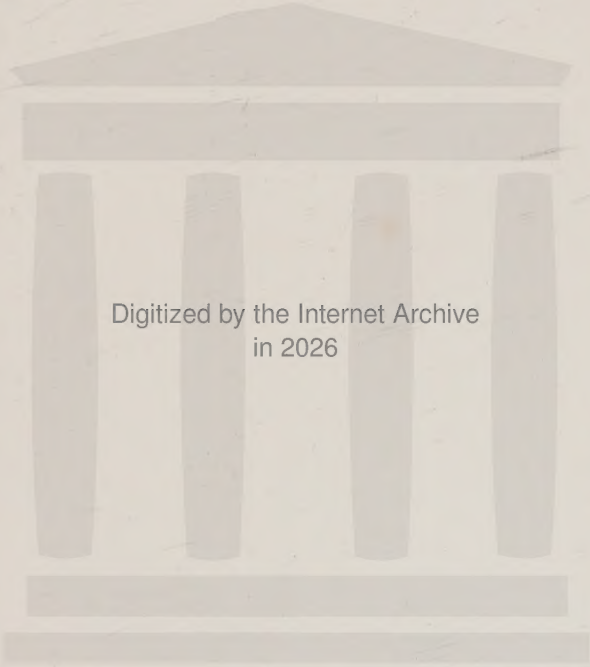
Wishing You A Merry
Christmas and A Happy
New Year.

To Mrs. L. Black.

From Virginia and Loyd.

Dec. 25. 191

JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT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"To ply your old trade?" I asked.

JOHN MARVEL ASSISTANT

BY

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1909

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TO

THOSE LOVED ONES

WHOSE NEVER FAILING SYMPATHY HAS

LED ME ALL THESE YEARS

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JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT

I

MY FIRST FAILURE

I shall feel at liberty to tell my story in my own way; rambling along at my own gait; now going from point to point; now tearing ahead; now stopping to rest or to ruminate, and even straying from the path whenever I think a digression will be for my own enjoyment.

I shall begin with my college career, a period to which I look back now with a pleasure wholly incommensurate with what I achieved in it; which I find due to the friends I made and to the memories I garnered there in a time when I possessed the unprized treasures of youth: spirits, hope, and abounding conceit. As these memories, with the courage (to use a mild term) that a college background gives, are about all that I got out of my life there, I shall dwell on them only enough to introduce two or three friends and one enemy, who played later a very considerable part in my life.

My family was an old and distinguished one; that is, it could be traced back about two hundred years, and several of my ancestors had accomplished enough to be known in the history of the State—a fact of which I was

so proud that I was quite satisfied at college to rest on their achievements, and felt no need to add to its distinction by any labors of my own.

We had formerly been well off; we had, indeed, at one time prior to the Revolutionary War, owned large estates —a time to which I was so fond of referring when I first went to college that one of my acquaintances, named Peck, an envious fellow, observed one day that I thought I had inherited all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. My childhood was spent on an old plantation, so far removed from anything that I have since known that it might almost have been in another planet.

It happened that I was the only child of my parents who survived, the others having been carried off in early childhood by a scourge of scarlet fever, to which circumstance, as I look back, I now know was due my mother's sadness of expression when my father was not present. I was thus subjected to the perils and great misfortune of being an only child, among them that of thinking the sun rises and sets for his especial benefit. I must say that both my father and mother tried faithfully to do their part to counteract this danger, and they not only believed firmly in, but acted consistently on, the Solomonic doctrine that to spare the rod is to spoil the child. My father, I must say, was more lenient, and I think gladly evaded the obligation as interpreted by my mother, declaring that Solomon, like a good many other persons, was much wiser in speech than in practice. He was fond of quoting the custom

of the ancient Scythians, who trained their youth to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth. And in this last particular he was inexorable.

Among my chief intimates as a small boy was a little darkey named "Jeams." Jeams was the grandson of one of our old servants—Uncle Ralph Woodson. Jeams, who was a few years my senior, was a sharp-witted boy, as black as a piece of old mahogany, and had a head so hard that he could butt a plank off a fence. Naturally he and I became cronies, and he picked up information on various subjects so readily that I found him equally agreeable and useful.

My father was admirably adapted to the conditions that had created such a character, but as unsuited to the new conditions that succeeded the collapse of the old life as a shorn lamb would be to the untempered wind of winter. He was a Whig and an aristocrat of the strongest type, and though in practice he was the kindest and most liberal of men, he always maintained that a gentleman was the choicest fruit of civilization; a standard, I may say, in which the personal element counted with him far more than family connection. "A king can make a nobleman, sir," he used to say; "but it takes Jehovah to make a gentleman." When the war came, though he was opposed to "Locofocoism" as he termed it, he enlisted as a private as soon as the State seceded, and fought through the war, rising to be a major and surrendering at Appomattox. When the war closed, he shut himself up on his estate, accepting the situation without moroseness, and consoling himself

with a philosophy much more misanthropic in expression than in practice.

My father's slender patrimony had been swept away by the war, but, being a scholar himself, and having a high idea of classical learning and a good estimate of my abilities—in which latter view I entirely agreed with him—he managed by much stinting to send me to college out of the fragments of his establishment. I admired greatly certain principles which were stamped in him as firmly as a fossil is embedded in the solid rock; but I fear I had a certain contempt for what appeared to me his inadequacy to the new state of things, and I secretly plumed myself on my superiority to him in all practical affairs. Without the least appreciation of the sacrifices he was making to send me to college, I was an idle dog and plunged into the amusements of the gay set—that set whose powers begin below their foreheads—in which I became a member and aspired to be a leader.

My first episode at college brought me some *éclat.*

II

THE JEW AND THE CHRISTIAN

I arrived rather late and the term had already begun, so that all the desirable rooms had been taken. I was told that I would either have to room out of college or take quarters with a young man by the name of Wolffert —like myself, a freshman. I naturally chose the latter. On reaching my quarters, I found my new comrade to be an affable, gentlemanly fellow, and very nice looking. Indeed, his broad brow, with curling brown hair above it; his dark eyes, deep and luminous; a nose the least bit too large and inclining to be aquiline; a well-cut mouth with mobile, sensitive lips, and a finely chiselled jaw, gave him an unusual face, if not one of distinction. He was evidently bent on making himself agreeable to me, and as he had read an extraordinary amount for a lad of his age and I, who had also read some, was lonely, we had passed a pleasant evening when he mentioned casually a fact which sent my heart down into my boots. He was a Jew. This, then, accounted for the ridge of his well-carved nose, and the curl of his soft brown hair. I tried to be as frank and easy as I had been before, but it was a failure. He saw my surprise as I saw his disappointment—a coolness took the place of the warmth that had been growing up between us for several hours, and we passed a stiff evening. He had already had one room-mate.

Next day, I found a former acquaintance who offered to take me into his apartment, and that afternoon, having watched for my opportunity, I took advantage of my room-mate's absence and moved out, leaving a short note saying that I had discovered an old friend who was very desirous that I should share his quarters. When I next met Wolffert, he was so stiff, that although I felt sorry for him and was ready to be as civil as I might, our acquaintance thereafter became merely nominal. I saw in fact, little of him during the next months, for he soon forged far ahead of me. There was, indeed, no one in his class who possessed his acquirements or his ability. I used to see him for a while standing in his doorway looking wistfully out at the groups of students gathered under the trees, or walking alone, like Isaac in the fields, and until I formed my own set, I would have gone and joined him or have asked him to join us but for his rebuff. I knew that he was lonely; for I soon discovered that the cold shoulder was being given to him by most of the students. I could not, however, but feel that it served him right for the "airs" he put on with me. That he made a brilliant exhibition in his classes and was easily the cleverest man in the class did not affect our attitude toward him; perhaps, it only aggravated the case. Why should he be able to make easily a demonstration at the blackboard that the cleverest of us only bungled through? One day, however, we learned that the Jew had a room-mate. Bets were freely taken that he would not stick, but he stuck—for it was John Marvel. Not that any of us knew what John Marvel

was; for even I, who, except Wolffert, came to know him best, did not divine until many years later what a nugget of unwrought gold that homely, shy, awkward John Marvel was!

It appeared that Wolffert had a harder time than any of us dreamed of.

He had come to the institution against the advice of his father, and for a singular reason: he thought it the most liberal institution of learning in the country! Little he knew of the narrowness of youth! His mind was so receptive that all that passed through it was instantly appropriated. Like a plant, he drew sustenance from the atmosphere about him and transmuted what was impalpable to us to forms of beauty. He was even then a man of independent thought; a dreamer who peopled the earth with ideals, and saw beneath the stony surface of the commonplace the ideals and principles that were to reconstruct and resurrect the world. An admirer of the Law in its ideal conception, he reprobated, with the fury of the Baptist, the generation that had belittled and cramped it to an instrument of torture of the human mind, and looked to the millenial coming of universal brotherhood and freedom.

His father was a leading man in his city; one who, by his native ability and the dynamic force that seems to be a characteristic of the race, had risen from poverty to the position of chief merchant and capitalist of the town in which he lived. He had been elected mayor in a time of stress; but his popularity among the citizens

generally had cost him, as I learned later, something among his own people. The breadth of his views had not been approved by them.

The abilities that in the father had taken this direction of the mingling of the practical and the theoretical had, in the son, taken the form I have stated. He was an idealist: a poet and a dreamer.

The boy from the first had discovered powers that had given his father the keenest delight, not unmingled with a little misgiving. As he grew up among the best class of boys in his town, and became conscious that he was not one of them, his inquiring and aspiring mind began early to seek the reasons for the difference. Why should he be held a little apart from them? He was a Jew. Yes, but why should a Jew be held apart? They talked about their families. Why, his family could trace back for two thousand and more years to princes and kings. They had a different religion. But he saw other boys with different religions going and playing together. They were Christians, and believed in Christ, while the Jew, etc. This puzzled him till he found that some of them—a few—did not hold the same views of Christ with the others. Then he began to study for himself, boy as he was, the history of Christ, and out of it came questions that his father could not answer and was angry that he should put to him. He went to a young Rabbi who told him that Christ was a good man, but mistaken in His claims.

So, the boy drifted a little apart from his own people, and more and more he studied the questions that arose

in his mind, and more and more he suffered; but more and more he grew strong.

The father, too proud of his son's independence to coerce him by an order which might have been a law to him, had, nevertheless, thrown him on his own resources and cut him down to the lowest figure on which he could live, confident that his own opinions would be justified and his son return home.

Wolffert's first experience very nearly justified this conviction. The fact that a Jew had come and taken one of the old apartments spread through the college with amazing rapidity and created a sensation. Not that there had not been Jews there before, for there had been a number there at one time or another. But they were members of families of distinction, who had been known for generations as bearing their part in all the appointments of life, and had consorted with other folk on an absolute equality; so that there was little or nothing to distinguish them as Israelites except their name. If they were Israelites, it was an accident and played no larger part in their views than if they had been Scotch or French. But here was a man who proclaimed himself a Jew; who proposed that it should ke known, and evidently meant to assert his rights and peculiarities on all occasions. The result was that he was subjected to a species of persecution which only the young Anglo-Saxon, the most brutal of all animals, could have devised.

As college filled rapidly, it soon became necessary to double up, that is, put two men in one apartment.

The first student assigned to live with Wolffert was Peck, a sedate and cool young man—like myself, from the country, and like myself, very short of funds. Peck would not have minded rooming with a Jew, or, for that matter, with the Devil, if he had thought he could get anything out of him; for he had few prejudices, and when it came to calculation, he was the multiplication-table. But Peck had his way to make, and he coolly decided that a Jew was likely to make him bear his full part of the expenses—which he never had any mind to do. So he looked around, and within forty-eight hours moved to a place out of college where he got reduced board on the ground of belonging to some peculiar set of religionists, of which I am convinced he had never heard till he learned of the landlady's idiosyncrasy.

I had incurred Peck's lasting enmity—though I did not know it at the time—by a witticism at his expense. We had never taken to each other from the first, and one evening, when someone was talking about Wolffert, Peck joined in and said that that institution was no place for any Jew. I said, "Listen to Peck sniff. Peck, how did you get in?" This raised a laugh. Peck, I am sure, had never read "Martin Chuzzlewit"; but I am equally sure he read it afterward, for he never forgave me.

Then came my turn and desertion which I have described. And then, after that interval of loneliness, appeared John Marvel.

Wolffert, who was one of the most social men I ever knew, was sitting in his room meditating on the strange

fate that had made him an outcast among the men whom he had come there to study and know. This was my interpretation of his thoughts: he would probably have said he was thinking of the strange prejudices of the human race—prejudices to which he had been in some sort a victim all his life, as his race had been all through the ages. He was steeped in loneliness, and as, in the mellow October afternoon, the sound of good-fellowship floated in at his window from the lawn outside, be grew more and more dejected. One evening it culminated. He even thought of writing to his father that he would come home and go into his office and accept the position that meant wealth and luxury and power. Just then there was a step outside, and someone stopped and after a moment, knocked at the door. Wolffert rose and opened it and stood facing a new student—a florid, round-faced, round-bodied, bow-legged, blue-eyed, awkward lad of about his own age.

"Is this number ——?" demanded the new-comer, peering curiously at the dingy door and half shyly looking up at the occupant.

"It is. Why?" Wolffert spoke abruptly.

"Well, I have been assigned to this apartment by the Proctor. I am a new student and have just come. My name is Marvel—John Marvel." Wolffert put his arms across the doorway and stood in the middle of it.

"Well, I want to tell you before you come in that I am a Jew. You are welcome not to come, but if you come I want you to stay." Perhaps the other's astonishment contained a query, for he went on hotly:

"I have had two men come here already and both of them left after one day. The first said he got cheaper board, which was a legitimate excuse—if true—the other said he had found an old friend who wanted him. I am convinced that he lied and that the only reason he left was that I am a Jew. And now you can come in or not, as you please, but if you come you must stay." He was looking down in John Marvel's eyes with a gaze that had the concentrated bitterness of generations in it, and the latter met it with a gravity that deepened into pity.

"I will come in and I will stay; Jesus was a Jew," said the man on the lower step.

"I do not know him," said the other bitterly.

"But you will. I know Him."

Wolffert's arms fell and John Marvel entered and stayed.

That evening the two men went to the supper hall together. Their table was near mine and they were the observed of all observers. The one curious thing was that John Marvel was studying for the ministry. It lent zest to the jokes that were made on this incongruous pairing, and jests, more or less insipid, were made on the Law and the Prophets; the lying down together of the lion and the lamb, etc.

It was a curious mating—the light-haired, moon-faced, slow-witted Saxon, and the dark, keen Jew with his intellectual face and his deep-burning eyes in which glowed the misery and mystery of the ages.

John Marvel soon became well known; for he was

one of the slowest men in the college. With his amusing awkwardness, he would have become a butt except for his imperturbable good-humor. As it was, he was for a time a sort of object of ridicule to many of us—myself among the number—and we had many laughs at him. He would disappear on Saturday night and not turn up again till Monday morning, dusty and disheveled. And many jests were made at his expense. One said that Marvel was practising preaching in the mountains with a view to becoming a second Demosthenes; another suggested that, if so, the mountains would probably get up and run into the sea.

When, however, it was discovered later that he had a Sunday-school in the mountains, and walked twelve miles out and twelve miles back, most of the gibers, except the inveterate humorists like myself, were silent.

This fact came out by chance. Marvel disappeared from college one day and remained away for two or three weeks. Wolffert either could not or would not give any account of him. When Marvel returned, he looked worn and ill, as if he had been starving, and almost immediately he was taken ill and went to the infirmary with a case of fever. Here he was so ill that the doctors quarantined him and no one saw him except the nurse—old Mrs. Denny, a wrinkled and bald-headed, old, fat woman, something between a lightwood knot and an angel—and Wolffert.

Wolffert moved down and took up his quarters in the infirmary—it was suggested, with a view to converting Marvel to Judaism—and here he stayed. The nursing

never appeared to make any difference in Wolffert's preparation for his classes; for when he came back he still stood easily first. But poor Marvel never caught up again, and was even more hopelessly lost in the befogged region at the bottom of the class than ever before. When called on to recite, his brow would pucker and he would perspire and stammer until the class would be in ill-suppressed convulsions, all the more enjoyable because of Leo Wolffert's agonizing over his wretchedness. Then Marvel, excused by the professor, would sit down and mop his brow and beam quite as if he had made a wonderful performance (which indeed, he had), while Wolffert's thin face would grow whiter, his nostrils quiver, and his deep eyes burn like coals.

One day a spare, rusty man with a frowzy beard, and a lank, stooping woman strolled into the college grounds, and after wandering around aimlessly for a time, asked for Mr. Marvel. Each of them carried a basket. They were directed to his room and remained with him some time, and when they left, he walked some distance with them.

It was at first rumored and then generally reported that they were Marvel's father and mother. It became known later that they were a couple of poor mountaineers named Shiflett, whose child John Marvel had nursed when it had the fever. They had just learned of his illness and had come down to bring him some chickens and other things which they thought he might need.

This incident, with the knowledge of Marvel's devotion, made some impression on us, and gained for Marvel, and incidentally for Wolffert, some sort of respect.

III

THE FIGHT

All this time I was about as far aloof from Marvel and Wolffert as I was from any one in the college.

I rather liked Marvel, partly because he appeared to like me and I helped him in his Latin, and partly because Peck sniffed at him, and Peck I cordially disliked for his cold-blooded selfishness and his plodding way.

I was strong and active and fairly good-looking, though by no means so handsome as I fancied myself when I passed the large plate-glass windows in the stores; I was conceited, but not arrogant except to my family and those I esteemed my inferiors; was a good poker-player; was open-handed enough, for it cost me nothing; and was inclined to be kind by nature.

I had, moreover, several accomplishments which led to a certain measure of popularity. I had a retentive memory, and could get up a recitation with little trouble; though I forgot about as quickly as I learned. I could pick a little on a banjo; could spout fluently what sounded like a good speech if one did not listen to me; could write, what someone has said, looked at a distance like poetry and, thanks to my father, could both fence and read Latin. These accomplishments served to bring me into the best set in college and, in time, to

undo me. For there is nothing more dangerous to a young man than an exceptional social accomplishment. A tenor voice is almost as perilous as a taste for drink; and to play the guitar, about as seductive as to play poker.

I was soon to know Wolffert better. He and Marvel, after their work became known, had been admitted rather more within the circle, though they were still kept near the perimeter. And thus, as the spring came on, when we all assembled on pleasant afternoons under the big trees that shaded the green slopes above the athletic field, even Wolffert and Marvel were apt to join us. I would long ago have made friends with Wolffert, as some others had done since he distinguished himself; for I had been ashamed of my poltroonery in leaving him; but, though he was affable enough with others, he always treated me with such marked reserve that I had finally abandoned my charitable effort to be on easy terms with him.

One spring afternoon we were all loafing under the trees, many of us stretched out on the grass. I had just saved a game of baseball by driving a ball that brought in three men from the bases, and I was surrounded by quite a group. Marvel, who was as strong as an ox, was second-baseman on the other nine and had missed the ball as the center-fielder threw it wildly. Something was said—I do not recall what—and I raised a laugh at Marvel's expense, in which he joined heartily. Then a discussion began on the merits in which Wolffert joined. I started it, but as Wolffert

appeared excited, I drew out and left it to my friends.

Presently, at something Wolffert said, I turned to a friend, Sam Pleasants, and said in a half-aside, with a sneer: "He did not see it; Sam, *you*—" I nodded my head, meaning, "You explain it."

Suddenly, Wolffert rose to his feet and, without a word of warning, poured out on me such a torrent of abuse as I never heard before or since. His least epithet was a deadly insult. It was out of a clear sky, and for a moment my breath was quite taken away. I sprang to my feet and, with a roar of rage, made a rush for him. But he was ready, and with a step to one side, planted a straight blow on my jaw that, catching me unprepared, sent me full length on my back. I was up in a second and made another rush for him, only to be caught in the same way and sent down again.

When I rose the second time, I was cooler. I knew then that I was in for it. Those blows were a boxer's. They came straight from the shoulder and were as quick as lightning, with every ounce of the giver's weight behind them. By this time, however, the crowd had interfered. This was no place for a fight, they said. The professors would come on us. Several were holding me and as many more had Wolffert; among them, John Marvel, who could have lifted him in his strong arms and held him as a baby. Marvel was pleading with him with tears in his eyes. Wolffert was cool enough now, but he took no heed of his friend's entreaties. Standing quite still, with the blaze in his

eyes all the more vivid because of the pallor of his face, he was looking over his friend's head and was cursing me with all the eloquence of a rich vocabulary. So far as he was concerned, there might not have been another man but myself within a mile.

In a moment an agreement was made by which we were to adjourn to a retired spot and fight it out. Something that he said led someone to suggest that we settle it with pistols. It was Peck's voice. Wolffert sprang at it. "I will, if I can get any gentleman to represent me," he said with a bitter sneer, casting his flashing, scornful eyes around on the crowd. "I have only one friend and I will not ask him to do it."

"I will represent you," said Peck, who had his own reasons for the offer.

"All right. When and where?" said I.

"Now, and in the railway-cut beyond the wood," said Wolffert.

We retired to two rooms in a neighboring dormitory to arrange matters. Peck and another volunteer represented Wolffert, and Sam Pleasants and Harry Houston were my seconds. I had expected that some attempt at reconciliation would be made; but there was no suggestion of it. I never saw such cold-blooded young ruffians as all our seconds were, and when Peck came to close the final cartel he had an air between that of a butcher and an undertaker. He looked at me exactly as a butcher does at a fatted calf. He positively licked his chops. I did not want to shoot Wolffert, but I could cheerfully have murdered Peck. While, however,

the arrangements were being made by our friends, I had had a chance for some reflection and I had used it. I knew that Wolffert did not like me. He had no reason to do so, for I had not only left him, but had been cold and distant with him. Still, I had always treated him civilly, and had spoken of him respectfully, which was more than Peck had always done. Yet, here, without the least provocation, he had insulted me grossly. I knew there must be some misunderstanding, and I determined on my "own hook" to find out what it was. Fortune favored me. Just then Wolffert opened the door. He had gone to his own room for a few moments and, on his return, mistook the number and opened the wrong door. Seeing his error, he drew back with an apology, and was just closing the door when I called him.

"Wolffert! Come in here a moment. I want to speak to you alone."

He re-entered and closed the door; standing stiff and silent.

"Wolffert, there has been some mistake, and I want to know what it is." He made not the least sign that he heard, except a flash, deep in his eyes, like a streak of lightning in a far-off cloud.

"I am ready to fight you in any way you wish," I went on. "But I want to know what the trouble is. Why did you insult me out of a clear sky? What had I done?"

"Everything."

"What! Specify. What was it?"

Wolffert . . . was cursing me with all the eloquence of a rich vocabulary.

"You have made my life Hell—all of you!" His face worked, and he made a wild sweep with his arm and brought it back to his side with clenched fist.

"But I?"

"You were the head. You have all done it. You have treated me as an outcast—a Jew! You have given me credit for nothing, because I was a Jew. I could have stood the personal contempt and insult, and I have tried to stand it; but I will put up with it no longer. It is appointed once for a man to die, and I can die in no better cause than for my people."

He was gasping with suppressed emotion, and I was beginning to gasp also—but for a different reason. He went on:

"You thought I was a coward because I was a Jew, and because I wanted peace—treated me as a poltroon because I was a Jew. And I made up my mind to stop it. So this evening my chance came. That is all."

"But what have I done?"

"Nothing more than you have always done; treated the Jew with contempt. But they were all there, and I chose you as the leader when you said that about the Jew."

"I said nothing about a Jew. Here, wait! Did you think I insulted you as a Jew this afternoon?" I had risen and walked over in front of him.

"Yes." He bowed.

"Well, I did not."

"You did—you said to Sam Pleasants that I was a 'damned Jew.'"

"What! I never said a word like it—yes, I did—I said to Sam Pleasants, that you did not see the play, and said, '*Sam, you*—' meaning, you, tell him.' Wait. Let me think a moment. Wolffert, I owe you an apology, and will make it. I know there are some who will think I do it because I am afraid to fight. But I do not care. I am not, and I will fight Peck if he says so. If you will come with me, I will make you a public apology, and then if you want to fight still, I will meet you."

He suddenly threw his right arm up across his face, and, turning his back on me, leaned on it against the door, his whole person shaken with sobs.

I walked up close to him and laid my hand on his shoulder, helplessly.

"Calm yourself," I began, but could think of nothing else to say.

He shook for a moment and then, turning, with his left arm still across his face, he held out his right hand, and I took it.

"I do not want you to do that. All I want is decent treatment—ordinary civility," he faltered between his sobs. Then he turned back and leant against the door, for he could scarcely stand. And so standing, he made the most forcible, the most eloquent, and the most burning defence of his people I have ever heard.

"They have civilized the world," he declared, "and what have they gotten from it but brutal barbarism. They gave you your laws and your literature, your morality and your religion—even your Christ; and you have violated every law, human and divine, in their

oppression. You invaded our land, ravaged our country, and scattered us over the face of the earth, trying to destroy our very name and Nation. But the God of Israel was our refuge and consolation. You crucified Jesus and then visited it on us. You have perpetuated an act of age-long hypocrisy, and have, in the name of the Prince of Peace, brutalized over his people. The cross was your means of punishment —no Jew ever used it. But if we had crucified him it would have been in the name of Law and Order; your crucifixion was in the name of Contempt; and you have crucified a whole people through the ages—the one people who have ever stood for the one God; who have stood for Morality and for Peace. A Jew! Yes, I am a Jew. I thank the God of Israel that I am. For as he saved the world in the past, so he will save it in the future."

This was only a part of it, and not the best part; but it gave me a new insight into his mind.

When he was through I was ready. I had reached my decision.

"I will go with you," I said, "not on your account, but on my own, and make my statement before the whole crowd. They are still on the hill. Then, if any one wants to fight, he can get it. I will fight Peck."

He repeated that he did not want me to do this, and he would not go; which was as well, for I might not have been able to say so much in his presence. So I went alone with my seconds, whom I immediately sought.

I found the latter working over a cartel at a table in the next room, and I walked in. They looked as solemn as owls, but I broke them up in a moment.

"You can stop this infernal foolishness. I have apologized to Wolffert. I have treated him like a pig, and so have you. And I have told him so, and now I am going out to tell the other fellows."

Their astonishment was unbounded and, at least, one of the group was sincerely disappointed. I saw Peck's face fall at my words and then he elevated his nose and gave a little sniff.

"Well, it did not come from *our* side," he said in a half undertone with a sneer.

I suddenly exploded. His cold face was so evil.

"No, it did not. I made it freely and frankly, and I am going to make it publicly. But if you are disappointed, I want to tell you that you can have a little affair on your own account. And in order that there may be no want of pretext, I wish to tell you that I believe you have been telling lies on me, and I consider you a damned, sneaking hypocrite."

There was a commotion, of course, and the others all jumped in between us. And when it was over, I walked out. Three minutes later I was on the hill among the crowd, which now numbered several hundred, for they were all waiting to learn the result; and, standing on a bench, I told them what I had said to Wolffert and how I felt I owed him a public apology, not for one insult, but for a hundred. There was a silence for a second, and then such a cheer broke out as

I never got any other time in my life! Cheers for Wolffert—cheers for Marvel, and even cheers for me. And then a freckled youth with a big mouth and a blue, merry eye broke the tension by saying:

"All bets are off and we sha'n't have a holiday tomorrow at all." The reprobates had been betting on which of us would fall, and had been banking on a possible holiday.

Quite a crowd went to Wolffert's room to make atonement for any possible slight they had put on him; but he was nowhere to be found. But that night, he and Marvel sat at our table and always sat there afterward. He illustrated George Borrow's observation that good manners and a knowledge of boxing will take one through the world.

IV

DELILAH

My career at college promised at one time after that to be almost creditable, but it ended in nothing. I was not a good student, because, I flattered myself, I was too good a fellow. I loved pleasure too much to apply myself to work, and was too self-indulgent to deny myself anything. I despised the plodding ways of cold-blooded creatures like Peck even more than I did the dullness of John Marvel. Why should I delve at Latin and Greek and Mathematics when I had all the poets and novelists. I was sure that when the time came I could read up and easily overtake and surpass the tortoise-like monotony of Peck's plodding. I now and then had an uneasy realization that Peck was developing, and that John Marvel, to whom I used to read Latin, had somehow come to understand the language better than I. However, this was only an occasional awakening, and the idea was too unpleasant for me to harbor it long. Meantime, I would enjoy myself and prepare to bear off the more shining honors of the orator and society-medalist.

At the very end I did, indeed, arouse myself, for I had a new incentive. I fell in love. Toward the mid-session holiday the place always filled up with pretty

girls. Usually they came just after "the exams"; but occasionally some of them came a little in advance: those who were bent on conquest. At such times, only cold anchorites like Marvel, or calculating machines like Peck, stuck to their books. Among the fair visitants this year was one whose reputation for beauty had already preceded her: Miss Lilian Poole. She was the daughter of a banker in the capital of the State, and by all accounts was a tearing belle. She had created a sensation at the Mardi Gras the year before, and one who could do that must be a beauty. She was reported more beautiful than Isabelle Henderson, the noted beauty of the Crescent city, whom she was said to resemble. Certainly, she was not lacking in either looks or intelligence; for those who had caught a glimpse of her, declared her a Goddess. I immediately determined that I would become her cavalier for the occasion. And I so announced to the dozen or more fellows who composed our set. They laughed at me.

"Why, you do not know her."

"But I shall know her."

"You are not on speaking terms with Professor Sterner"—the Professor of Mathematics at whose house she was stopping. The Professor, a logarithmic machine, and I had had a falling out not long before. He had called on me for a recitation, one morning after a dance, and I had said, "I am not prepared, sir."

"You never are prepared," he said, which the class appeared to think amusing. He glanced over the room.

"Mr. Peck."

Peck, also, had been at the dance the night before, though he said he had a headache, and caused much amusement by his gambols and antics, which were like those of a cow; I therefore expected him to say, "unprepared" also. But not so.

"I was unwell last night, sir."

"Ah! Well, I am glad, at least, that you have some sort of a legitimate excuse."

I flamed out and rose to my feet.

"Are you alluding to me, sir?"

"Take your seat, sir. I deny your right to question me."

"I will not take my seat. I do not propose to sit still and be insulted. I demand an answer to my question."

"Take your seat, I say. I will report you to the Faculty," he shouted.

"Then you will have to do so very quickly; for I shall report you immediately." And with that, I stalked out of the room. The Faculty met that afternoon and I laid my complaint before them, and as the students, knowing the inside facts, took my side, the Faculty held that the Professor committed the first breach and reprimanded us both. I was well satisfied after I had met and cut the Professor publicly.

I now acknowledge the untowardness of the situation; but when the boys laughed, I pooh-poohed it.

"I do not speak to old Sterner, but I will speak to her the first time I meet her."

"I will bet you do not," cried Sam Pleasants.

"Supper for the crowd," chimed in several. They were always as ready to bet as their long-haired ancestors were in the German forests, where they bet themselves away, and kept their faith, to the amazement of a Roman gentleman, who wrote, "*istam vocant fidem.*"

We were all in a room, the windows of which looked across the lawn toward the pillared portico of Professor Sterner's house, and some of the boys were gazing over toward the mansion that sheltered the subject of our thoughts. And as it happened, at that moment, the door opened and out stepped the young lady herself, in a smart walking costume, topped by a large hat with a great, drooping, beguiling, white ostrich feather. An exclamation drew us all to the window.

"There she is now!" Without doubt, that was she.

"Jove! What a stunner!"

"She is alone. There is your chance."

"Yes, this is the first time you have seen her; now stop jawing and play ball."

"Or pay up."

"Yes, supper for the crowd: porterhouse steak; chicken, and waffles to end with."

So they nagged me, one and all.

"Done," I said, "I will do it now."

"You have never seen her before?"

"Never." I was arranging my tie and brushing my hair.

"You swear it?"

But I hurried out of the door and slammed it behind me.

I turned down the walk that led across the campus to the point whither Miss Poole was directing her steps, and I took a gait that I judged should meet her at the intersection of the walks. I was doing some hard thinking, for I knew the window behind me was crowded with derisive faces.

As I approached her, I cut my eye at her, and a glance nearly overthrew my resolution. She was, indeed, a charming picture as she advanced, though I caught little more than a general impression of a slim, straight, statuesque figure, a pink face, surmounted by a profusion of light hair, under a big hat with white feathers, and a pair of bluish eyes. I glanced away, but not before she had caught my eye. Just then a whistle sounded behind me, and my nerve returned. I suddenly quickened my pace, and held out my hand.

"Why, how do you do?" I exclaimed with well-feigned surprise and pleasure, plumping myself directly in front of her. She paused; looked at me, hesitated, and then drew back slightly.

"I think—, I—. You have made a mistake, I think."

"Why, do you not remember Henry Glave? Is this not Miss Belle Henderson?" I asked in a mystified way.

"No, I am not Miss Henderson."

"Oh! I beg your pardon—I thought—" I began. Then, as I moved back a little, I added, "Then you must be Miss Lilian Poole; for there cannot be more than two like you on earth. I beg your pardon."

I backed away.

"I am," she said. Her mounting color showed that she was at least not angry, and she gave proof of it.

"Can you tell me? Is not that the way to Dr. Davis's house?"

"Yes—I will show you which it is." My manner had become most respectful.

"Oh! Don't trouble yourself, I beg you."

"It is not the least trouble," I said sincerely, and it was the only truth I had told. I walked back a few steps, hat in hand, pointing eagerly to the house. And as I left, I said, "I hope you will pardon my stupid mistake."

"Oh! I do not think it stupid. She is a beauty."

"*I* think so." I bowed low. I saw the color rise again as I turned away, much pleased with myself, and yet a good deal ashamed, too.

When I returned to "the lair," as we termed Sam Pleasants's room, the boys seized me. They were like howling dervishes. But I had grown serious. I was very much ashamed of myself. And I did the only decent thing I could—I lied, or as good as lied.

"I will give the supper if you will stop this yelling. Do you suppose I would make a bet about a girl I did not know?"

This took the spirit out of the thing, and only one of them knew the truth. Marvel, who was present, looked at me seriously, and that night said to me half sadly,

"You ought not to have done that."

"What? I know it. It was an ungentlemanly thing."

"I do not mean that. You ought not to have told a story afterward."

How he knew it I never knew.

But I had gotten caught in my own mesh. I had walked into the little parlor without any invitation, and I was soon hopelessly entangled in the web at which I had hitherto scoffed. I fell violently in love.

I soon overcame the little difficulty that stood in my way. And, indeed, I think Miss Lilian Poole rather helped me out about this. I did not allow grass to grow under my feet, or any impression I had made to become effaced. I quickly became acquainted with my Diana-like young lady; that is, to speak more exactly, I got myself presented to her, for my complete acquaintance with her was of later date, when I had spent all the little patrimony I had. I saw immediately that she knew the story of the wager, though she did not at that time refer to it, and so far as I could tell, she did not resent it. She, at least, gave no sign of it. I asked her to allow me to escort her to a German, but she had an engagement.

"Who is it?" I inquired rather enviously.

She had a curious expression in her eyes—which, by the way, were a cool blue or gray, I never could be sure which, and at times looked rather like steel.

She hesitated a moment and her little mouth drew in somewhat closely.

"Mr. Peck." Her voice was a singular instrument. It had so great a compass and possessed some notes that affected me strangely; but it also could be without

the least expression. So it was now when she said, "Mr. Peck," but she colored slightly, as I burst out laughing.

"Peck! Pecksniff? Did you ever see him dance? I should as soon have thought of your dancing with a clothes-horse."

She appeared somewhat troubled.

"Does he dance so badly as that? He told me he danced."

"So he does—like this." I gave an imitation of Peck's gyrations, in which I was so earnest that I knocked over a table and broke a fine lamp, to my great consternation.

"Well, you are realistic," observed Miss Poole, calmly, who struck me as not so much concerned at my misfortune as I might have expected. When, however, she saw how really troubled I was, she was more sympathetic.

"Perhaps, if we go out, they will not know who did it," she observed.

"Well, no, I could not do that," I said, thinking of Peck, and then as her expression did not change, I fired a shot that I meant to tell. "Peck would do that sort of thing. *I* shall tell them."

To this she made no reply. She only looked inscrutably pretty. But it often came back to me afterward how calmly and quite as a matter of course she suggested my concealing the accident, and I wondered if she thought I was a liar.

She had a countenance that I once thought one of the most beautiful in the world; but which changed rarely.

Its only variations were from an infantile beauty to a statuesque firmness.

Yet that girl, with her rather set expression and infantile face, her wide open, round eyes and pink prettiness, was as deep as a well, and an artesian well at that.

I soon distanced all rivals. Peck was quickly disposed of; though, with his nagging persistence, he still held on. This bored me exceedingly and her too, if I could judge by her ridicule of him and her sarcasm which he somehow appeared too stupid to see. He succumbed, however, to my mimicry of his dancing; for I was a good mimic, and Peck, in a very high collar and with very short trousers on his dumpy legs, was really a fair mark. Miss Poole was by no means indifferent to public opinion, and a shaft of satire could penetrate her mail of complacency. So when she returned later to the classic shades of the university, as she did a number of times for Germans and other social functions, I made a good deal of hay. A phrase of Peck's, apropos of this, stuck in my memory. Some one—it was, I think, Leo Wolffert—said that I appeared to be making hay, and Peck said, "Yes, I would be eating it some day." I often wondered afterward how he stumbled on the witticism.

Those visits of my tall young dulcinea cost me dear in the sequel. While the other fellows were boning I was lounging in the drawing-room chattering nonsense or in the shade of the big trees in some secluded nook, writing her very warm poems of the character which

Horace says is hated both of Gods and men. Several of these poems were published in the college magazine. The constant allusions to her physical charms caused Peck to say that I evidently considered Miss Poole to be "composed wholly of eyes and hair." His observation that a man was a fool to write silly verses to a girl he loved, because it gave her a wrong idea of her charms, I, at the time, set down to sheer envy, for Peck could not turn a rhyme; but since I have discovered that for a practical person like Peck, it has a foundation, of truth.

V

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

Meantime, my studies—if any part of my desultory occupation could be so termed—suffered undeniably. My appearance at the classroom door with a cigarette, which I flung away just in time not to carry it into the room, together with my chronic excuse of being "unprepared," moved the driest of my professors to the witticism that I "divided my time between a smoke and a flame." It was only as the finals drew near that I began to appreciate that I would have the least trouble in "making my tickets," as the phrase went. Sam Pleasants, Leo Wolffert and my other friends had begun to be anxious for me for some time before—and both Wolffert and John Marvel had come to me and suggested my working, at least, a little: Wolffert with delicacy and warmth; John Marvel with that awkward bluntness with which he always went at anything. I felt perfectly easy in my mind then and met their entreaties scornfully.

"Why, I did well enough at the Intermediates," I said.

"Yes, but," said John Marvel, "Delilah was not here then——"

I was conscious, even though I liked the reference to Samson, of being a little angered; but John Marvel

looked so innocent and so hopelessly friendly that I passed it by with a laugh and paid Miss Poole more attention than ever.

The Debater's Medal had for a long time been, in the general estimation, as good as accorded me; for I was a fluent, and I personally thought, eloquent speaker, and had some reading. But when Wolffert entered the debate, his speeches so far outshone mine that I knew at once that I was beat. They appeared not so much prepared for show, as mine were, as to come from a storehouse of reading and reflection. Wolffert, who had begun to speak without any design of entering the contest for the Medal, would generously have retired, but I would not hear of that. I called Peck to account for a speech which I had heard of his making: that "the contest was between a Jew and a jug"; but he denied making it, so I lost even that satisfaction.

I worked for the Magazine Medal; but my "poems" —"To Cynthia" and "To Felicia," and my fanciful sketches, though they were thought fine by our set, did not, in the estimation of the judges, equal the serious and solemn essays on Julius Cæsar and Alexander Hamilton, to which the prize was awarded. At least, the author of those essays had worked over them like a dog, and in the maturer light of experience, I think he earned the prizes.

I worked hard—at least, at the last, for my law degree, and every one was sure I would win—as sure as that Peck would lose; but Peck scraped through while mine was held up—because the night before the

degrees were posted I insisted on proving to the professor who had my fate in his hands, and whom I casually ran into, that a "gentleman drunk was a gentleman sober," the idea having been suggested to my muddled brain by my having just been good-natured enough to put to bed Peck. I finally got the degree, but not until I had been through many tribulations, one of which was the sudden frost in Miss Poole's manner to me. That girl was like autumn weather. She could be as warm as summer one minute and the next the thermometer would drop below the freezing point. I remember I was her escort the evening of the Final Ball. She looked like Juno with the flowers I had gone out in the country to get for her from an old garden that I knew. Her face was very high bred and her pose majestic. I was immensely proud of her and of myself as her escort—and as Peck stalked in with a new and ill-fitting suit of "store-clothes" on, I fancy I put on my toppiest air. But Peck had a shaft and he came there to shoot it. As he passed near us, he said in a loud voice to someone, "The B. L. list is posted."

"Are you through?" demanded the other.

"Yep."

"Anybody failed 't we expected to get through?"

"'T depends on who you expected to get through. Glave's not on it."

His shaft came home. I grew cold for a minute and then recovered myself. I saw my partner's face change. I raised my head and danced on apparently gayer than

ever, though my heart was lead. And she played her part well, too. But a few minutes later when Peck strutted up, a decided cock to his bullet head, I heard her, as I turned away, congratulate him on his success.

I slipped out and went over to the bulletin-board where the degree-men were posted, and sure enough, I was not among them. A curious crowd was still standing about and they stopped talking as I came up, so I knew they had been talking about me. I must say that all showed concern, and sympathy was written on every face. It was, at least, sweet to know that they all considered it a cursed shame, and set my failure down to hostility on the part of one of the professors. I was determined that no one should know how hard hit I was, and I carried my head high till the ball was out, and was so lofty with Miss Poole that she was mystified into being very receptive. I do not know what might have happened that night if it had not been for old John Marvel. I learned afterward that I was pretty wild. He found me when I was wildly denouncing the law professor who had failed to put me through in some minor course, and was vowing that I would smash in his door and force my diploma from him. I might have been crazy enough to attempt it had not old John gotten hold of me. He and Wolffert put me to bed and stayed with me till I was sober. And sober enough I was next day.

As I have said, I received my diploma finally; but I lost all the prestige and pleasure of receiving it along with my class, and I passed through some of the bitterest hours that a young man can know.

Among my friends at college—I might say among my warmest friends—was my old crony "Jeams," or, as he spoke of himself to those whom he did not regard as his social equals, or whom he wanted to amuse himself with, "Mister Woodson"; a little later changed to "Professor Woodson," as more dignified and consonant with the managing class of the institution. When I left for college he followed me, after a brief interval, and first appeared as a waiter at the college boarding-house where I boarded, having used my name as a reference, though at home he had never been nearer the dining-room than the stable. Here he was promptly turned out, and thereupon became a hanger-on of mine and a "Factotum" for me and my friends.

He was now a tall, slim fellow, with broad shoulders and the muscles of Atlas—almost but not quite black and with a laugh that would have wiled Cerberus. He had the shrewdness of a wild animal, and was as imitative as a monkey, and this faculty had inspired and enabled him to pick up all sorts of acquirements, ranging from reading and writing to sleight-of-hand tricks, for which he showed a remarkable aptitude. Moreover, he had a plenty of physical courage, and only needed to be backed by someone, on whom he relied, to do anything.

I was naturally attached to him and put up with his rascalities, though they often taxed me sorely, while he, on his part, was so sincerely attached to me, that I believe he would have committed any crime at my bidding.

He considered my old clothes his property, and what was far more inconvenient, considered himself the judge of the exact condition and moment when they should pass from my possession to his.

He was a handsome rascal, and took at times such pride in his appearance that, as he was about my size, I had often to exercise a close watch on my meagre wardrobe. He had not only good, but really distinguished manners, and, like many of his race, prided himself on his manners. Thus, on an occasion when he passed Peck at college, and touched his hat to him, a civility which Peck ignored, Wolffert said to him, "Jeams, Mr. Peck don't appear to recognize you."

"Oh! yes," said Jeams, "he recognizes me, but he don't recognize what's due from one gent'man to another."

"Are you going to keep on touching your hat to him?" asked Wolffert.

"Oh! yes, suh," said Jeams, "I takes keer o' my manners, and lets him take keer o' hisn'."

Such was "Jeams," my "body servant," as he styled himself, on occasions when he had an eye to some article of my apparel or stood in especial need of a donation.

He hated Peck with as much violence as his easy-going nature was capable of, and had no liking for Wolffert. The fact that the latter was a Jew and yet my friend, staggered him, though he put up with him for my sake, and on the night of my fight with Wolffert, I think he would, had he had a chance, have murdered

him, as I am sure he would have murdered the professor who threw me on my degree. He got much fuller than I got that night, and his real grief and shame were among the heaviest burdens I had to bear.

Miss Poole returned home the next afternoon after the delivery of the diplomas, and I heard that Peck went off on the same train with her.

I expected some sympathy from the girl for whom my devotion had cost me so much; but she was as cool and sedate over my failure as if it had been Peck's.

All she said was, "Why did not you win the honors?"

"Because I did not work enough for them."

"Why did not you work more?"

I came near saying, "Because I was fooling around you"; but I simply said, "Because I was so certain of winning them."

"You showed rather bad judgment." That was all the sympathy I received from her.

The old law professor when he took leave of me said —and I remember said it gravely—"Mr. Glave, you have the burden of too many gifts to carry."

I was pleased by the speech and showed it. He looked at me keenly from under his bushy eyebrows. "I commend to you the fable of the hare and the tortoise. We shall hear of Peck."

I wondered how he knew I was thinking of Peck with his common face, hard eyes, and stumpy legs.

"You shall hear of me, too," I declared with some haughtiness.

He only smiled politely and made no answer.

Nettled, I asked arrogantly, "Don't you think I have more sense—more intellect than Peck?"

"More intellect—yes—much more.—More sense? No. Remember the fable. 'There are ways that you know not and paths that you have not tried.'"

"Oh! that fable—it is as old as——"

"Humanity," he said. "'To scorn delights and live laborious days.' You will never do that—Peck will."

I left him, angry and uncomfortable.

I had rather looked forward to going to the West to a near cousin of my father's, who, if report were true, had made a fortune as a lawyer and an investor in a Western city. He and my father had been boys together, but my cousin had gone West and when the war came, he had taken the other side. My father, however, always retained his respect for him and spoke of him with affection. He had been to my home during my early college-life—a big, stolid, strong-faced man, silent and cold, but watchful and clear-minded—and had appeared to take quite a fancy to me.

"When he gets through," he had said to my father, "send him out to me. That is the place for brains and ambition, and I will see what is in him for you."

Now that I had failed, I could not write to him; but as he had made a memorandum of my graduation year, and as he had written my father several times, I rather expected he would open the way for me. But no letter came. So I was content to go to the capital of the State.

VI

THE METEOR

I am convinced now that as parents are the most unselfish creatures, children are the veriest brutes on earth. I was too self-absorbed to think of my kind father, who had sacrificed everything to give me opportunities which I had thrown under the feet of Lilian Poole and who now consoled and encouraged me without a word of censure. Though I was deeply grieved at the loss of my parents, I did not know until years afterward what an elemental and life-long calamity that loss was.

My father appeared as much pleased with my single success as if I had brought him home the honors which I had been boasting I would show him. He gave me only two or three bits of advice before I left home. "Be careful with other people's money and keep out of debt," he said. "Also, have no dealings with a rascal, no matter how tightly you think you can tie him up." And his final counsel was, "Marry a lady and do not marry a fool."

I wondered if he were thinking of Lilian Poole.

However, I had not the least doubt in my mind about winning success both with her and with that even more jealous Mistress—The Law. In fact, I quite meant to revolutionize things by the meteoric character of my career.

I started out well. I took a good office fronting on the street in one of the best office-buildings—an extravagance I could not afford. Peck had a little dark hole on the other side of the hall. He made a half proposal to share my office with me, but I could not stand that. I, however, told him that he was welcome to use my office and books as much as he pleased, and he soon made himself so much at home in my office that I think he rather fell into the habit of thinking my clients his own.

Before I knew many people I worked hard; read law and a great deal of other literature. But this did not last long, for I was social and made acquaintances easily. Moreover, I soon began to get cases; though they were too small to satisfy me—quite below my abilities, I thought. So, unless they promised me a chance of speaking before a jury, I turned them over to Peck, who would bone at them and work like a horse, though I often had to hunt up the law for him, a labor I never knew him to acknowledge.

At first I used to correspond with both John Marvel and Wolffert; but gradually I left their letters unanswered. John, who had gone West, was too full of his country parish to interest me, and Wolffert's abstractions were too altruistic for me.

Meantime, I was getting on swimmingly. I was taken into the best social set in the city, and was soon quite a favorite among them. I was made a member of all the germans as well as of the best club in town; was welcomed in the poker-game of "the best fellows"

in town, and was invited out so much that I really had no time to do much else than enjoy my social success. But the chief of the many infallible proofs I had was my restoration to Lilian Poole's favor. Since I was become a sort of toast with those whose opinion she valued highly, she was more cordial to me than ever, and I was ready enough to let by-gones be by-gones and dangle around the handsomest girl in the State, daughter of a man who was president of a big bank and director of a half-dozen corporations. I was with her a great deal. In fact, before my second winter was out, my name was coupled with hers by all of our set and many not in our set. And about three evenings every week I was to be found basking in her somewhat steady smile, either at some dance or other social entertainment; strolling with her in the dusk on our way home from the fashionable promenade of —— Street—which, for some reason, she always liked, though I would often have preferred some quieter walk —or lounging on her plush-covered sofa in her back drawing-room. I should have liked it better had Peck taken the hint that most of my other friends had taken and kept away from her house on those evenings which by a tacit consent of nearly every one were left for my visits. But Peck, who now professed a great friendship for me, must take to coming on precisely the evenings I had selected for my calls. He never wore a collar that fitted him, and his boots were never blacked. Miss Lilian used to laugh at him and call him "the burr"—indeed, so much that I more than once told

her, that while I was not an admirer of Peck myself, I thought the fact that he was really in love with her ought to secure him immunity from her sarcasm. We had quite a stiff quarrel over the matter, and I told her what our old law professor had said of Peck.

I had rather thought that, possibly, Mr. Poole, knowing of the growing relation of intimacy between myself and his daughter, would throw a little of his law business my way; but he never did. He did, in fact, once consult me at his own house about some extensive interests that he owned and represented together in a railway in a Western city; but though I took the trouble to hunt up the matter and send him a brief on the point carefully prepared, he did not employ me, and evidently considered that I had acted only as a friend. It was in this investigation that I first heard of the name Argand and also of the P. D. and B. D. R.R. Co. I heard long afterward that he said I had too many interests to suit him; that he wanted a lawyer to give him all his intellect, and not squander it on politics, literature, sport, and he did not know what besides. This was a dig at my rising aspirations in each of these fields. For I used to write now regularly for the newspapers, and had one or two articles accepted by a leading monthly magazine—a success on which even Peck congratulated me, though he said that, as for him, he preferred the law to any other entertainment. My newspaper work attracted sufficient attention to inspire me with the idea of running for Congress, and I began to set my traps and lay my triggers for that.

Success appeared to wait for me, and my beginning was "meteoric."

Meteoric beginnings are fatal. The meteor soon fades into outer darkness—the outer darkness of the infinite abyss. I took it for success and presumed accordingly, and finally I came down. I played my game too carelessly. I began to speculate—just a little at first; but more largely after awhile. There I appeared to find my proper field; for I made money almost immediately, and I spent it freely, and, after I had made a few thousands, I was regarded with respect by my little circle.

I began to make money so much more easily by this means than I had ever done by the law that I no longer thought it worth while to stay in my office, as I had done at first, but spent my time, in a flock of other lambs, in front of a blackboard in a broker's office, figuring on chances which had already been decided in brokers' offices five hundred miles away. Thus, though I worked up well the cases I had, and was fairly successful with them, I found my clients in time drifting away to other men not half as clever as I was, who had no other aim than to be lawyers. Peck got some of my clients. Indeed, one of my clients in warning me against speculating, which, he said, ruined more young men than faro and drink together, told me he had learned of my habit through Peck. Peck was always in his office or mine. I had made some reputation, however, as a speaker, and as I had taken an active part in politics and had many friends, I stood a good chance for the

commonwealth's attorneyship; but I had determined to fly higher: I wanted to go to Congress.

I kept a pair of horses now, since I was so successful, and used to hunt in the season with other gay pleasure-lovers, or spend my afternoons riding with Miss Poole, who used to look well on horseback. We often passed Peck plodding along alone, stolid and solemn, "taking his constitutional," he said. I remember once as we passed him I recalled what the old professor had said of him, and I added that I would not be as dull as Peck for a fortune. "Do you know," said Miss Poole, suddenly, "I do not think him so dull; he has improved." Peck sat me out a few nights after this, and next day I nearly insulted him; but he was too dull to see it.

I knew my young lady was ambitious; so I determined to please her, and, chucking up the fight for the attorneyship, I told her I was going to Congress, and began to work for it. I was promised the support of so many politicians that I felt absolutely sure of the nomination.

Peck told me flatly that I did not stand the ghost of a show; and began to figure. Peck was always figuring. He advised me to stand for the attorneyship, and said I might get it if I really tried. I knew better, however, and I knew Peck, too, so I started in. To make a fight I wanted money, and it happened that a little trip I had taken in the summer, when I was making a sort of a splurge, together with an unlooked-for and wholly inexplicable adverse turn in the market had taken all my cash. So, to make it up, I went into the biggest deal I

ever tried. What was the use of fooling about a few score dollars a point when I could easily make it a thousand? I would no longer play at the shilling-table. I had a "dead-open-and-shut thing" of it. I had gotten inside information of a huge railroad deal quietly planned, and was let in as a great favor by influential friends, who were close friends of men who were manipulating the market, and especially the P. D. and B. D., a North-western road which had been reorganized some years before. Mr. Poole had some interest in it and this made me feel quite safe as to the deal. I knew they were staking their fortunes on it. I was so sure about it that I even advised Peck, for whom I had some gratitude on account of his advice about the attorneyship, to let me put him in for a little. But he declined. He said he had other use for his money and had made it a rule not to speculate. I told him he was a fool, and I borrowed all I could and went in.

It was the most perfectly managed affair I ever saw. We—our friends—carried the stock up to a point that was undreamed of, and money was too valuable to pay debts with, even had my creditors wanted it, which they did not, now that I had recouped and was again on the crest of the wave. I was rich and was doubling up in a pyramid, when one of those things happened that does not occur once in ten million times and cannot be guarded against! We were just prepared to dump the whole business, when our chief backer, as he was on his way in his carriage to close the deal, was struck by lightning! I was struck by the same bolt. In twenty

minutes I was in debt twenty thousand dollars. Telegrams and notices for margin began to pour in on me again within the hour. None of them bothered me so much, however, as a bank notice that I had overchecked an account in which I had a sum of a few hundred dollars belonging to a client of mine—an old widowed lady, Mrs. Upshur, who had brought it to me to invest for her, and who trusted me. She had been robbed by her last agent and this was really all that was left her. I remembered how she had insisted on my keeping it for her against the final attack of the wolf, she had said. "But suppose I should spend it," I had said jesting. "I'm not afraid of your spending it, but of myself—I want so many things. If I couldn't trust you, I'd give up." And now it was gone. It came to me that if I should die at that moment she would think I had robbed her, and would have a right to think so. I swear that at the thought I staggered, and since then I have always known how a thief must sometimes feel. It decided me, however. I made up my mind that second that I would never again buy another share of stock on a margin as long as I lived, and I wrote telegrams ordering every broker I had to sell me out and send me my accounts, and I mortgaged my old home for all I could get. I figured that I wanted just one hundred dollars more than I had. I walked across the hall into Peck's little dark office. He was poring over a brief. I said, "Peck, I am broke."

"What? I am sorry to hear it—but I am not surprised." He was perfectly cool, but did look sorry.

"Peck," I went on, "I saw you pricing a watch the other day. Here is one I gave three hundred dollars for." I showed him a fine chronometer repeater I had bought in my flush time.

"I can't give over a hundred dollars for a watch," he said.

"How much will you give me for this?"

"You mean with the chain?"

"Yes"—I had not meant with the chain, but I thought of old Mrs. Upshur.

"I can't give over a hundred."

"Take it," and I handed it to him and he gave me a hundred-dollar bill, which I took with the interest and handed, myself, to my old lady, whom I advised to let Peck invest for her on a mortgage. This he did, and I heard afterward netted her six per cent—for a time.

That evening I went to see Lilian Poole. I had made up my mind quickly what to do. That stroke of lightning had showed me everything just as it was, in its ghastliest detail. If she accepted me, I would begin to work in earnest, and if she would wait, as soon as I could pay my debts, I would be ready; if not, then—! However, I walked right in and made a clean breast of it, and I told her up and down that if she would marry me I would win. I shall never forget the picture as she stood by the heavy marble mantel in her father's rich drawing-room, tall and uncompromising and very handsome. She might have been marble herself, like the mantel, she was so cold, and I, suddenly aroused by the shock, was on fire with resolve and fierce hunger for

sympathy. She did not hesitate a moment; and I walked out. She had given me a deep wound. I saw the sun rise in the streets.

Within two weeks I had made all my arrangements; had closed up my affairs; given up everything in the world I had; executed my notes to my creditors and told them they were not worth a cent unless I lived, in which case they would be worth principal and interest; sold my law books to Peck for a price which made his eyes glisten, had given him my office for the unexpired term, and was gone to the West.

The night before I left I called to see the young lady again—a piece of weakness. But I hated to give up.

She looked unusually handsome.

I believe if she had said a word or had looked sweet at me I might have stayed, and I know I should have remained in love with her. But she did neither. When I told her I was going away, she said, "Where?" That was every word—in just such a tone as if she had met me on the corner, and I had said I was going to walk. She was standing by the mantel with her shapely arm resting lightly on the marble. I said, "God only knows, but somewhere far enough away."

"When are you coming back?"

"Never."

"Oh, yes, you will," she said coolly, arranging a bracelet, so coolly that it stung me like a serpent and brought me on my feet.

"I'll be—! No, I will not," I said. "Good-by."

"Good-by." She gave me her hand and it was as cool as her voice.

"Good-by." And mine was as cold as if I were dead. I swear, I believe sometimes I did die right there before her and that a new man took my place within me. At any rate my love for her died, slain by the ice in her heart; and the foolish fribble I was passed into a man of resolution.

As I walked out of her gate, I met Peck going in, and I did not care. I did not even hate him. I remember that his collar was up to his ears. I heard afterward that she accepted him that same week. For some inexplicable reason I thought of John Marvel as I walked home. I suddenly appeared nearer to him than I had done since I left college, and I regretted not having answered his simple, affectionate letters.

I started West that night.

VII

THE HEGIRA

In my ménage was a bull-terrier puppy—brindled, bow-legged and bold—at least, Jeams declared Dix to be a bull-pup of purest blood when he sold him to me for five dollars and a suit of clothes that had cost sixty. I found later that he had given a quarter for him to a negro stable-boy who had been sent to dispose of him. Like the American people, he was of many strains; but, like the American people, he proved to have good stuff in him, and he had the soul of a lion. One eye was bleared, a memento of some early and indiscreet insolence to some decisive-clawed cat; his ears had been crookedly clipped and one perked out, the other in, and his tail had been badly bobbed; but was as expressive as the immortal Rab's eloquent stump. He feared and followed Jeams, but he adored me. And to be adored by woman or dog is something for any man to show at the last day. To lie and blink at me by the hour was his chief occupation. To crawl up and lick my hand, or failing that, my boot, was his heaven.

I always felt that, with all my faults, which none knew like myself, there must be some basic good in me to inspire so devoted a love.

When I determined to leave for the West the night of my final break with Lilian Poole, in my selfishness I

forgot Dix; but when I reached home that night, sobered and solitary, there was Dix with his earnest, adoring gaze, his shrewd eye fixed on me, and his friendly twist of the back. His joy at my mere presence consoled me and gave me spirit, though it did not affect my decision.

Jeams, who had followed me from college, at times hung around my office, carried Miss Poole my notes and flowers and, in the hour of my prosperity, blossomed out in a gorgeousness of apparel that partly accounted for my heavy expense account, as well as for the rapid disappearance of the little private stock I occasionally kept or tried to keep in a deceptive-looking desk which I used as a sideboard for myself and friends. He usually wore an old suit of mine, in which he looked surprisingly well, but on occasions he wore a long-tailed coat, a red necktie and a large soft, light hat which, cocked on the side of his head, gave him the air of an Indian potentate. I think he considered himself in some sort a partner. He always referred to me and my business as "us" and "our" business, and, on some one's asking him derisively if he were a partner of mine, he replied, "Oh, no, sir, only what you might term a minor connectee of the Captain." He was, however, a very useful fellow, being ready to do anything in the world I ordered, except when he was tight or had some piece of rascality on foot—occasions by no means rare. He wore, at election time, a large and flaming badge announcing that he was something in his party—the opposite party to mine; but I have reason to believe that when I was in politics he perjured himself freely and

committed other crimes against the purity of the ballot on which economists declare all Representative Government is founded. One of my ardent friends once informed me that he thought I ought not to allow Jeams to wear that badge—it was insulting me openly. I told him that he was a fool, that I was so afraid Jeams would insist on my wearing one, too, I was quite willing to compromise. In fact, I had gotten rather dependent on him. Then he and I held such identical views as to Peck, not to mention some other mutual acquaintances, and Jeams could show his contempt in such delightfully insolent ways.

I had intimated to Jeams some time before, immediately after my first serious reverse in the stock market, that I was no longer as flush as I had been, and that unless affairs looked up I might move on to fresh pastures —or, possibly, I put it, to a wider field for the exercise of my powers; whereupon he promptly indicated his intention to accompany me and share my fortune. But I must say, he showed plainly his belief that it was a richer pasture which I was contemplating moving into, and he viewed the prospect with a satisfaction much like that of a cat which, in the act of lapping milk, has cream set before it. The only thing that puzzled him was that he could not understand why I wanted more than I had. He said so plainly.

"What you want to go 'way for, Cap'n? Whyn't you stay where you is? You done beat 'em all—evy one of 'em——"

"Oh! no, I haven't."

"Go 'way f'om here—you is an' you know you is—dthat's the reason you carry yo' head so high." (He little knew the true reason.) "An' if you hadn't, all you got to do is to walk in yonder—up yonder (with a toss of his head in the direction of Miss Poole's home), an' hang up your hat, and den you ain got nuthin' to do but jus' write yo' checks."

I laughed at Jeams's idea of the situation, and of old Poole's son-in-law's position. But it was rather a bitterer laugh than he suspected. To soothe my conscience and also to draw him out, I said, though I did not then really think it possible:

"Why, she's going to marry Peck."

Jeams turned around and actually spat out his disgust.

"What, dthat man!" Then, as he looked at me to assure himself that I was jesting, and finding a shade less amusement in my countenance than he had expected, he uttered a wise speech.

"Well, I tell you, Cap'n—if dthat man gits her he ought to have her, 'cause he done win her an' you ain't know how to play de game. You done discard de wrong card."

I acknowledged in my heart that he had hit the mark, and I laughed a little less bitterly, which he felt—as did Dix, lying against my foot which he suddenly licked twice.

"An' I'll tell you another thing—you's well rid of her. Ef she likes dthat man bes', let him have her, and you git another one. Der's plenty mo,' jes' as good and

better, too, and you'll meck her sorry some day. Dthat's de way I does. If dey wants somebody else, I let's 'em have 'em. It's better to let 'em have 'em befo' than after."

When Jeams walked out of my room, he had on a suit which I had not had three months, and a better suit than I was able to buy again in as many years. But he had paid me well for it. I had in mind his wise saying when I faced Lilian Poole without a cent on earth, with all gone except my new-born resolution and offered her only myself, and as I walked out of her gate I consoled myself with Jeams's wisdom.

When I left Miss Poole I walked straight home, and having let nobody know, I spent the evening packing up and destroying old letters and papers and odds and ends; among them, all of Lilian Poole's lettters and other trash. At first, I found myself tending to reading over and keeping a few letters and knickknacks; but as I glanced over the letters and found how stiff, measured, and vacant her letters were as compared with my burning epistles, in which I had poured out my heart, my wrath rose, and I consigned them all to the flames, whose heat was the only warmth they had ever known.

I was in the midst of this sombre occupation, with no companion but my angry reflections and no witness but Dix, who was plainly aware that something unsuual was going on and showed his intense anxiety, in the only method that dull humanity has yet learned to catalogue as Dog-talk: by moving around, wagging his stump of a twist-tail and making odd, uneasy sounds and move-

ments. His evident anxiety about me presently attracted my attention, and I began to think what I should do with him. I knew old Mrs. Upshur would take and care for him as she would for anything of mine; but Dix, though the best tempered of canines, had his standards, which he lived up to like a gentleman, and he brooked no insolence from his inferiors or equals and admitted no superiors. Moreover, he needed out-door exercise as all sound creatures do, and this poor, old decrepit Mrs. Upshur could not give him. I discarded for one reason or another my many acquaintances, and gradually Jeams took precedence in my mind and held it against all reasoning. He was drunken and worthless—he would possibly, at times, neglect Dix, and at others, would certainly testify his pride in him and prove his confidence by making him fight; but he adored the dog and he feared me somewhat. As I wavered there was a knock and Jeams walked in. He was dressed in my long frock coat and his large, gray hat was on the back of his head—a sure sign that he was tight, even had not his dishevelled collar and necktie and his perspiring countenance given evidence of his condition. As he stood in the door, his hand went up to his hat; but at sight of the room, he dropped it before he could reach the hat and simply stared at me in blank amazement.

"Hi! What you doin'?" he stammered.

"Packing up."

"Where you goin'?"

"Going away."

"When you comin' back?"

"Hi! What you doin'?" he stammered.

"Never."

"What! Well, damned if I ain' gwine wid you, then."

The tone was so sincere and he was evidently so much in earnest that a lump sprang into my throat. I turned away to keep him from seeing that I was moved, and it was to keep him still from finding it out, that I turned on him with well feigned savageness as he entered the room.

"You look like going with me, don't you! You drunken scoundrel! Take your hat off, sir"—for in his confusion he had wholly forgotten his manners. They now came back to him.

"Ixcuse me—Cap'n" (with a low bow). "Ixcuse me, suh. I al'ays removes my hat in the presence of the ladies and sech distinguished gent'mens as yourself, suh; but, Cap'n——"

"Drunken rascal!" I muttered, still to hide my feeling.

"Cap'n—I ain' drunk—I'll swear I ain' had a drink not in—" He paused for an appropriate term and gave it up. "—Not in—I'll swear on a stack of Bibles as—as high as Gen'l Washin's monument—you bring it heah—is you got a Bible? You smell my breath!"

"Smell your breath! I can't smell anything but your breath. Open that window!"

"Yes, suh," and the window was meanderingly approached, but not reached, for he staggered slightly and caught on a chair.

"Cap'n, I ain' had a drink for a year—I'll swear to

dthat. I'll prove it to you. I ain' had a cent to buy one wid in a month—I was jus' comin' roun' to ast you to gi' me one—jus' to git de dust out o' my throat."

"Dust! Clean those things up there and get some dust in your throat."

"Yes, suh—yes, suh—Cap'n"—insinuatingly, as his eye fell on Dix, who was standing looking attentively first at me and then at Jeams, completely mystified by my tone, but ready to take a hand if there was any need for him. "Cap'n——"

"Well, what is it? What do you want now?"

"Will you lend me a hundred?"

"A hundred dollars?"

"Yes, suh—you see——"

"No. I'll give you a hundred licks if you don't get to work and clean up that floor."

"Cap'n—yes, suh—I'm gwine to clean 't up—but, Cap'n——"

"Well?"

"I'll let you in—jes' len' me ten—or five—or jes' one dollar—hit's a cinch—Lord! I can meck ten for one jist as easy—Dee don' know him—Dee think he ain' nuthing but a cur dawg—dats what I told 'em. And I'll meck you all de money in the worl'—I will dat."

"What are you talking about?"

"Well, you see, hits dthis away—I wouldn't bother you if dat yaller bar-keeper nigger hadn' clean me up wid them d——d loaded bones of hisn—jis' stole it from me—yes, suh—jis'——"

"Cleaned you up? When?"

"Dthis very evenin'—I had seventeen dollars right in my pocket, heah. You ax Mr. Wills if I didn't. He seen me have it—I had jes' got it, too——"

"You liar—you just now told me you hadn't had a cent in a month, and now you say you had seventeen dollars this evening." Jeams reared himself up.

"I toll you dthat?" He was now steadying himself with great gravity and trying to keep his eyes fixed on me.

"Yes."

"No, sir. I never toll you dthat in this worl'! 'Cause 'twould a been a lie—and I wouldn' tell you a lie for nuthin' on earth—I never had no seventeen dollars."

"I know you didn't—I know that's true, unless you stole it; but you said——"

"No, sir—what I said was—dthat if you'd len' me seventeen dollars I'd take Dix there and kill any dawg dthat yaller nigger up yonder in the Raleigh Hotel could trot out—I didn' keer what he was—and I said I'd—give you a hundred dollars out of the skads I picked up—dthat's what I said, and you got it wrong."

"You'll do what?"

"You see, hit's this away—dthat big-moufed, corn-fed yaller nigger—he was allowin' dthat Mr. Mulligan had a dawg could chaw up any dawg dis side o' torment, and I 'lowed him a ten dthat I had one 's could lick H—l out o' any Mulligan or Mulligan's dawg top o' groun'—'n' dthat you'd len' me th' ten to put up."

"Well, you've lost one ten anyway—I won't lend you a cent, and if I catch you fighting Dix, I'll give you the

worst lambing you ever had since Justice John had you skinned for stealing those chickens."

Jeams threw up his eyes in reprobation.

"Now, Cap'n—you know I never stole dem stags—dthat old jestice he jes' sentenced me 'cause you was my counsel an' cause' I was a nigger an' he had'n had a chance at me befo'—I bet if I'd give' him half de money 'sted o' payin' you, he'd a' let me off mighty quick'"

"Pay me! you never paid me a cent in your life."

"Well, I promised to pay you, didn' I? An' ain't dthat de same thin'?"

"Not by a big sight——"

"Dthat's de way gent'mens does."

"Oh! do they?"

Jeams came back to the main theme.

"Mr. Hen, ain' you gwine let me have dem ten dollars, sho' 'nough? Hit's jes' like pickin' money up in de road: Dix kin kill dat dawg befo' you ken say Jack Roberson."

"Jeams," I said, "look at me!"

"Yes, suh, I'm lookin'," and he was.

"I am going away to-night——"

"Well, I'm gwine width you, I ain' gwine stay heah by myself after you and Dix is gone."

"No, you can't do that. I don't know yet exactly where I am going, I have not yet decided. I am going West—to a big city."

"Dthat's where I want to go—" interrupted Jeams.

"And when I get settled I'll send for Dix—I'm going to leave him with you."

"Yes, suh, I'll teck keer of him sure. I'll match him against any dawg in dthis town—he can kill dthat dawg of dthat yaller nigger's——"

"No, if you put him in a fight, I'll kill you the first time I see you—d'you hear?"

"Yes, suh—I ain' gwine put him in no fight. But ef he gits in a fight—you know he's a mighty high-spirited dawg—he don' like dawgs to come nosin' roun' him. Hit sort o' aggrivates him. An' ef he should——?"

"I'll whip you as sure as you live——"

"Jes' ef he should?"

"Yes—if you let him."

"No, suh, I ain' gwine let him. You lef him wid me."

And though I knew that he was lying, I was content to leave the dog with him; for I was obliged to leave him with someone, and I knew he loved this dog and hoped my threat would, at least, keep him from anything that might hurt him.

I drifted out to the Club later and casually dropped the information that I was going away. I do not think it made much impression on my friends there—in fact, I hardly think they took the information seriously. They were a kindly lot, but took life and me lightly.

When I left town at midnight, the rain was pouring down and there was no one at the dreary station to see me off but Jeams and Dix, and as the train pulled out I stood on the platform to say good-by to Jeams, who was waving his right hand sadly, while with the other he gripped the collar of the dejected Dix who, with his eyes on me, struggled spasmodically and viciously.

Suddenly Dix turned on his captor with a snarl and snap which startled Jeams so that he let him go, then whirling about, he tore after the train which was just beginning to quicken its speed. He had to rush over ties and switch-rods, but he caught up and made a spring for the step. He made good his footing, but Jeams was running and waving wildly and, with his voice in my ears, I pushed the dog off with my foot and saw him roll over between the tracks. Nothing daunted, however, he picked himself up, and with another rush, sprang again for the step. This time only his forefeet caught and he hung on by them for a second, then began to slip—inch by inch he was slipping off as I stood watching him, when, under an impulse, fearing that he might be killed, I hastily, and with a sudden something in my throat, reached down and caught him just in time to pull him up, and taking him in my arms I bore him into the car. I confess that, as I felt him licking my hands, a warmer feeling than I had had for some time came around my heart which had been like a lump of ice during these last days, and I was glad no one was near by who knew me. I made up my mind that, come what might, I would hold on to my one faithful friend.

VIII

PADAN-ARAM

I first went to the town in which lived the relative, the cousin of my father's whom I have mentioned. It was a bustling, busy city and he was reputed the head of the Bar in his State—a man of large interests and influence. I knew my father's regard for him. I think it was this and his promise about me that made me go to him now. I thought he might help me, at least with advice; for I had his name.

I left my trunk and Dix at the hotel and called on him at his large office. In my loneliness, I was full of a new-born feeling of affection for this sole kinsman. I thought, perhaps, he might possibly even make me an offer to remain with him and eventually succeed to his practice. I had not seen him two seconds, however, before I knew this was folly. When I had sent in my name by an obtrusive-eyed office-boy, I was kept waiting for some time in the outer office where the office-boy loudly munched an apple, and a couple of clerks whispered to each other with their eyes on the private office-door. And when I was ushered in, he gave me a single keen look as I entered and went on writing without asking me to sit down, and I would not sit without an invitation. When he had finished he looked up, and nodded his head with a sort of jerk toward a chair. He

was a large man with a large head, short gray hair, a strong nose, a heavy chin, and gray eyes close together, without the kindliness either of age or of youth. I took a step toward him and in some embarrassment began to speak rapidly. I called him "Cousin," for blood had always counted for a great deal with us, and I had often heard my father speak of him with pride. But his sharp look stopped me.

"Take a seat," he said, more in a tone of command than of invitation, and called me "Mister." It was like plunging me into a colder atmosphere. I did not sit down, but I was so far into my sentence I could not well stop. So I went on and asked him what he thought of my settling there, growing more and more embarrassed and hot with every word.

"Have you any money?" he asked shortly.

"Not a cent."

"Well, I have none to lend you. You need not count on me. I would advise—" But I did not wait for him to finish. I had got hold of myself and was self-possessed enough now.

"I did not ask you to lend me any money, either," I said, straightening myself up. "I did ask you to give me some advice; but now I do not want that or anything else you have, d——n you! I made a mistake in coming to you, for I am abundantly able to take care of myself."

Of course, I know now that he had something on his side. He supposed me a weak, worthless dog, if not a "dead-beat." But I was so angry with him I could

not help saying what I did. I stalked out and slammed the door behind me with a bang that made the glass in the sash rattle; and the two or three young men, busy in the outer office, looked up in wonder. I went straight to the hotel and took the train to the biggest city my money would get me to. I thought a big city offered the best chances for me, and, at least, would hide me. I think the fact that I had once written a brief for Mr. Poole in the matter of his interest in car lines there influenced me in my selection.

I travelled that night and the next day and the night following, and partly because my money was running low and partly on Dix's account, I rode in a day-coach. The first night and day passed well enough, but the second night I was tired and dusty and lonely.

On the train that night I spent some serious hours. Disappointment is the mother of depression and the grandmother of reflection. I took stock of myself and tried to peer into the dim and misty future, and it was gloomy work. Only one who has started out with the world in fee, and after throwing it away in sheer recklessness of folly, suddenly hauls up to find himself bankrupt of all he had spurned in his pride: a homeless and friendless wanderer on the face of the earth, may imagine what I went through. I learned that night what the exile feels; I dimly felt what the outcast experiences. And I was sensible that I had brought it all on myself. I had wantonly wasted all my substance in riotous living and I had no father to return to—nothing, not even swine to keep in a strange land. I

faced myself on the train that night, and the effigy I gazed on I admitted to be a fool.

The train, stuffy and hot, lagged and jolted and stopped, and still I was conscious of only that soul-shifting process of self-facing. The image of Peck, the tortoise, haunted me. At times I dozed or even slept very soundly; though doubled up like a jack-knife, as I was, I could not efface myself even in my sleep. But when I waked, there was still myself—grim, lonely, homeless—haunting me like a stabbed corpse chained to my side.

I was recalled to myself at last by the whimpering of children packed in a seat across the aisle from me. They had all piled in together the first night somewhere with much excitement. They were now hungry and frowsy and wretched. There were five of them, red-cheeked and dirty; complaining to their mother who, worn and bedraggled herself, yet never lost patience with one or raised her voice above the soothing pitch in all her consoling.

At first I was annoyed by them; then I was amused; then I wondered at her, and at last, I almost envied her, so lonely was I and so content was she with her little brood.

Hitched on to the train the second night was a private car, said to be that of someone connected with a vice-president of the road. The name of the official, which I learned later, was the same as that of an old college friend of my father's, and I had often heard my father mention him as his successful rival with his first sweet-

heart, and he used to tease my mother by recalling the charms of Kitty MacKenzie, the young lady in question, whose red golden hair he declared the most beautiful hair that ever crowned a mortal head—while my mother, I remember, insisted that her hair was merely carroty, and that her beauty, though undeniable, was distinctly of the milkmaid order—a shaft which was will aimed, for my mother's beauty was of the delicate, aristocratic type. The fact was that Mr. Leigh had been a suitor of hers before my father met her, and having been discarded by her, had consoled himself with the pretty girl, to whom my father had been attentive before he met and fell "head over heels in love" with a new star at a college ball.

Mr. Leigh, I knew, had gone West, and grown up to be a banker, and I wondered vaguely if by any chance he could be the same person.

The train should have reached my destination in time for breakfast, and we had all looked forward to it and made our arrangements accordingly. The engine, however, which had been put on somewhere during the night, had "given out," and we were not only some hours late, but were no longer able to keep steadily even the snail's pace at which we had been crawling all night. The final stop came on a long upgrade in a stretch of broken country sparsely settled, and though once heavily wooded, now almost denuded. Here the engine, after a last futile, gasping effort, finally gave up, and the engineer descended for the dozenth time to see "what he could do about it." To make matters worse, the

water in our car had given out, and though we had been passing streams a little before, there was no water in sight where we stopped. It soon became known that we should have to wait until a brakeman could walk to the nearest telegraph station, miles off, and have another engine despatched to our aid from a town thirty or more miles away. So long as there had been hope of keeping on, however faint, there had been measurable content, and the grumbling which had been heard at intervals all the latter part of the night had been sporadic and subdued; but now, when the last hope was gone, and it was known that we were at last "stuck" for good, there was an outbreak of ill-humor from the men, though the women in the car still kept silent, partly subdued by their dishevelled condition and partly because they were content for once, while listening to the men. Now and then a man who had been forward would come back into the car, and address someone present, or speak to the entire car, and in the silence that fell every one listened until he had delivered himself. But no one had yet given a satisfactory explanation of the delay.

At last, a man who sat near me gave an explanation. "The engine lost time because it had too heavy a load. It's a heavy train, anyway, and they put a private car on and the engine could not pull it, that's all that's the matter." He spoke with the finality of a judge, and sat back in his seat, and we all knew that he had hit the mark, and given the true cause. Henceforward he was regarded with respect. He really knew things.

I insensibly took note of him. He was a middle-sized, plain-looking man with bright eyes and a firm mouth. Whether by a coincidence or not, just at that moment something appeared to have given way in the car: babies began to cry; children to fret, and the elders to fume and grumble. In a short time every one in the car was abusing the railroad and its management. Their inconsiderateness, their indifference to the comfort of their passengers.

"They pay no more attention to us and take no more care of us than if we were so many cattle," growled a man. "I couldn't get a single berth last night." He was a big, sour-looking fellow, who wore patent-leather shoes on his large feet, and a silk hat, now much rubbed—and a dirty silk handkerchief was tucked in his soiled collar, and in his soiled shirt front showed a supposititious diamond. He was, as I learned later, named Wringman, and was a labor-leader of some note.

"Not as much as of cattle—for, at least, they water them," said another, "they care nothing about our comfort."

"Unless they ride in a Pullman," interjected the man near me, who had explained the situation.

The woman with the five children suddenly turned. "And that's true, too," she said, with a glance of appreciation at him and a sudden flash of hate at the big man with the diamond. Off and on all night the children had, between naps, begged for water, and the mother had trudged back and forth with the patience of an Egyptian water-carrier, but now the water had

given out, and the younger ones had been whimpering because they were hungry.

I went forward, and about the engine, where I stood for a time, looking on while we waited, I heard further criticism of the road, but along a different line, from the trainmen:

"Well, I'll have to stand it," said one of them, the engineer, a man past middle-age. "No more strikes for me. That one on the C. B. and B. D. taught me a lesson. I was pretty well fixed then—had a nice house and lot 'most paid for in the Building Company, and the furniture all paid for, except a few instalments, and it all went. I thought we'd 'a' starved that winter—and my wife's been sick ever since."

"I know," said his friend, "but if they cut down we've got to fight. I'm willin' to starve to beat 'em."

"You may be; but you ain't got little children and a sick wife."

A little later I saw the flashily dressed man with the dirty handkerchief talking to him, and insisting that they should fight the company: "We'll bring 'em to their knees," he said, with many oaths. The engineer kept silence, the younger man assented warmly.

I went back to my car. Presently matters grew so bad in the car that my sympathies for the children were aroused, and I determined to see if I could not ameliorate the conditions somewhat. I went back to the Pullman car to see if there was any chance of buying some food: but the haggard looking porter said there was nothing on the car. "They usually go in to breakfast," he

explained. My only chance would be the private car behind. So, after I had been forward and ascertained that we would not get away for at least an hour more, I went back and offered to look after the older children of the little family. "I am going to take my dog for a run; I'll take the little folks too." The mother with a baby in her arms and a child, hardly more than a baby, tugging at her, looked unutterably tired, and was most grateful to me. I took the older children and went down the bank, and turning back, began to pick the straggling wild flowers beside the track. As we passed the private car, the door opened, and the cook tossed a waiterful of scraps out on the ground on which both Dixie and the children threw themselves. But, though there was plenty of bread, it had all been ruined by being in the slop-water; so Dixie was soon left in undisturbed possession.

A little beyond the end of the train we came on a young girl engaged in the same occupation as ourselves. Her back was toward us, but her figure was straight and supple, and her motions easy and full of spring. The sight of the young lady so fresh and cool, with the morning sun shining on a thick coil of shining hair, quite revived me. I drew near to get a good look at her and also to be within shot of a chance to speak to her should opportunity offer. If I were a novelist trying to describe her I should say that she was standing just at the foot of a bank with a clump of green bushes behind her, her arms full of flowers which she had gathered. For all these were there, and might have been created

there for her, so harmonious were they with the fresh young face above them and the pliant form which clasped them. I might further have likened her to Proserpine with her young arms full of blossoms from Sicilian meads; for she resembled her in other ways than in embracing flowers and breathing fragrance as she stood in the morning light. But truth to tell, it was only later that I thought of these. The first impression I received, as it will be the last, was of her eyes. Dimples, and snow-white teeth; changing expression where light and shadow played, with every varying feeling, and where color came and went like roses thrown on lilies, and lilies on roses, all came to me later on. But that was in another phase. Her eyes were what I saw at first, and never since have I seen the morning or the evening star swimming in rosy light but they have come back to me. I remember I wore a blue suit and had on an old yachting cap, which I had gotten once when on a short cruise with a friend. I was feeling quite pleased with myself. She suddenly turned.

"Are you the brakeman?"

"No, I am not." I could scarcely help laughing at my sudden fall. "But perhaps I can serve you?" I added.

"Oh! I beg pardon! No, I thank you. I only wanted to ask— However, it is nothing."

Dix had, on being let out, and satisfying himself that I was coming along, made a wild dash down the bank and alongside the train, and now on his return rush, catching sight of the young lady in her fresh frock, without waiting for the formality of an introduction,

he made a dash for her and sprang up on her as if he had known her all his life. I called to him, but it was too late, and before I could stop him, he was up telling her what after my first look at her I should have liked to tell her myself: what a sweet charming creature we thought her.

Dixie had no scruples of false pride inculcated by a foolish convention of so-called society. He liked her and said so, and she liked him for it, while I was glad to shine for a moment in the reflected glory of being his master.

"What a fine dog!" she exclaimed as she patted him, addressing the children, who, with soiled clothes and tousled heads, were gazing at the spick-and-span apparition in open-mouthed wonder. "How I envy you such a dog."

"He ain't ours, he belongs to him," said the child, pointing to me, as I stooped at a little distance pretending to pull blossoms while I listened.

"Oh! Who is he? Is he your father?" My face was averted.

"Oh! no. We don't know who he is; he just took us so."

"Took you so?"

"You see," explained the next older one, "our mother, she's got the baby and Janet, and the gentleman, he said he would take us and get some wild flowers, because we hadn't had any breakfast, and that dog"—But the dog was forgotten on the instant.

"Have not had any breakfast!" exclaimed the young lady with astonishment.

"No; you see, we had some bread last night, but that's given out. *She* ate the last piece last night—" (she pointed at the smallest child)—"and we were so hungry; she cried, and Mamma cried, and that gentleman——"

By this time I had turned and I now stepped forward. I confess, that as I turned, wrath was in my heart, but at sight of that horrified face, in its sympathy, my anger died away.

"Oh! and to think what I wasted! How did it happen?"

"The train was late and they had expected to get in to breakfast, but the engine gave out," I explained.

"And they have not had any breakfast?"

"No one on the train."

"You see," chimed in the oldest girl, glad to be able to add information, "the train's heavy anyway, and they put a private car on, and it was more than the engine could pull, that's all that's the matter."

The young lady turned to me:

"Do you mean that our car has caused all this trouble?"

I nodded. "I don't know about 'all,' but it helped."

"You poor little dears!" she said, rushing to the children, "come with me." And, taking the youngest child by the hand, she hurried to the rear steps of the car, with the others close behind, while Dixie, who appeared to know what was in store, walked close beside her knee, as much as to say, "Don't leave me out."

As the train stood on an embankment, the step was too high for her to climb up, so I offered to put the children up on the top step for her. Then came the difficulty of her getting up herself. She called the porter, but the door was shut and there was no answer.

"Let me help you up, too," I said. "Here, you can reach the rail, and step in my hand and spring up. I can help you perfectly well—as though you were mounting a horse," I added, seeing her hesitate. And, without giving her time to think, I stooped and lifted her to the step. As she sprang up, the door opened, and a portly lady, richly dressed and with several diamond rings on, came out on the platform. She gazed on the little group with astonishment.

"Why, Eleanor, what is this? Who are these?"

"They are some poor children, Aunt, who have had no breakfast, and I am going to give them some."

"Why, they can't come in here, my dear. Those dirty little brats come in our car! It is impossible, my dear."

"Oh, no, it is not, Aunty," said the young girl with a laugh, "they have had no breakfast."

"Give them food, my dear, if you please, but I beg you not to bring them into this car. Look how dirty they are! Why, they might give us all some terrible disease!"

But Miss Eleanor had closed her ears to the plump lady's expostulations, and was arranging with a surly servant for something to eat for the children. And just then the question of their invasion of the car was

settled by the train's starting. I undertook to run forward alongside the car, but seeing an open ravine ahead spanned by a trestle, and that the train was quickening its speed, I caught Dixie and threw him up on the rear platform, and then swung myself up after him. The rear door was still unlocked, so I opened it to pass through the car. Just inside, the elderly lady was sitting back in an arm-chair with a novel in her lap, though she was engaged at the moment in softly polishing her nails. She stopped long enough to raise her jewelled lorgnette, and take a shot at me through it:

"Are you the brakeman?" she called.

"No, Madame," I said grimly, thinking, "Well, I must have a brakeman's air to-day."

"Oh! Will you ring that bell?"

"Certainly." I rang and, passing on, was met by the porter coming to answer the bell.

"This is a private car," he said shortly, blocking my way.

"I know it." I looked him in the eye.

"You can't go th'oo this car."

"Oh! yes, I can. I have got to go through it. Move out of my way."

My tone and manner impressed him sufficiently, and he surlily moved aside, muttering to himself; and I passed on, just conscious that the stout lady had posted herself at the opening of the passage-way behind, and had beckoned to the porter, who sprang toward her with alacrity. As I passed through the open saloon, the

young lady was engaged in supplying my little charges with large plates of bread and butter, while a grinning cook, in his white apron and cap, was bringing a yet further supply. She turned and smiled to me as I passed.

"Won't you have something, too? It is a very poor apology for a breakfast; for we had finished and cleared away, but if——"

"These little tots don't appear to think so," I said, my ill-humor evaporating under her smile.

"Well, won't you have something?"

I declined this in my best Chesterfieldian manner; alleging that I must go ahead and tell their mother what a good fairy they had found.

"Oh! it is nothing. To think of these poor little things being kept without breakfast all morning. My father will be very much disturbed to find that this car has caused the delay."

"Not if he is like his sister," I thought to myself, but I only bowed, and said, "I will come back in a little while, and get them for their mother." To which she replied that she would send them to their mother by the porter, thereby cutting off a chance which I had promised myself of possibly getting another glimpse of her. But the sight of myself at this moment in a mirror hastened my departure. A large smudge of black was across my face, evidently from a hand of one of the children. The prints of the fingers in black were plain on my cheek, while a broad smear ran across my nose. No wonder they thought me a brakeman.

As I reached the front door of the car I found it locked and I could not open it. At the same moment the porter appeared behind me.

"Ef you'll git out of my way, I'll open it," he said in a tone so insolent that my gorge rose.

I stood aside and, still muttering to himself, he unlocked the door, and with his hand on the knob, stood aside for me to pass. As I passed I turned to look for Dixie, who was following me, and I caught the words, "I'se tired o' po' white folks and dogs in my car." At the same moment Dixie passed and he gave him a kick, which drew a little yelp of surprise from him. My blood suddenly boiled. The door was still open and, quick as light, I caught the porter by the collar and with a yank jerked him out on the platform. The door slammed to as he came, and I had him to myself. With my hand still on his throat I gave him a shake that made his teeth rattle.

"You black scoundrel," I said furiously. "I have a good mind to fling you off this train, and break your neck." The negro's face was ashy.

"Indeed, boss," he said, "I didn' mean no harm in the world by what I said. If I had known you was one of dese gentlemens, I'd 'a' never said a word; nor suh, that I wouldn'. An' I wouldn' 'a' tetched your dorg for nuthin', no suh."

"Well, I'll teach you something," I said. "I'll teach you to keep a civil tongue in your head, at least."

"Yes, suh, yes, suh," he said, "I always is, I always

tries to be, I just didn't know; nor suh, I axes your pardon. I didn' mean nuthin' in the worl'."

"Now go in there and learn to behave yourself in the future," I said.

"Yes, suh, I will." And, with another bow, and a side look at Dix, who was now growling ominously, he let himself in at the door and I passed on forward.

IX

I PITCH MY TENT

When, a little later, my small charges were brought back to their mother (to whom I had explained their absence), it was by the young lady herself, and I never saw a more grateful picture than that young girl, in her fresh travelling costume, convoying those children down the car aisle. Her greeting of the tired mother was a refreshment, and a minute after she had gone the mother offered me a part of a substantial supply of sandwiches which she had brought her, so that I found myself not quite so much in sympathy as before with the criticism of the road that was now being freely bandied about the car, and which appeared to have made all the passengers as one.

Not long after this we dropped the private car at a station and procceded on without it. We had, however, not gone far when we stopped and were run into a siding and again waited, and after a time, a train whizzed by us—a special train with but two private cars on it. It was going at a clipping rate, but it did not run so fast that we did not recognize the private car we had dropped some way back, and it soon became known throughout our train that we had been sidetracked to let a special with private cars have the right-of-way. I

confess that my gorge rose at this, and when the man in front of me declared that we were the most patient people on earth to give public franchises, pay for travelling on trains run by virtue of them, and then stand being shoved aside and inconvenienced out of all reason to allow a lot of bloated dead-heads to go ahead of us in their special trains, I chimed in with him heartily.

"Well, the road belongs to them, don't it?" inquired a thin man with a wheezing voice. "That was Canter's private train, and he took on the Argand car at that station back there."

"'They own the road!' How do they own it? How did they get it?" demanded the first speaker warmly.

"Why, you know how they got it. They got it in the panic—that is, they got the controlling interest."

"Yes, and then ran the stock down till they had got control and then reorganized and cut out those that wouldn't sell—or couldn't—the widows and orphans and infants—that's the way they got it."

"Well, the court upheld it?"

"Yes, under the law they had had made themselves to suit themselves. You know how 'twas! You were there when 'twas done and saw how they flung their money around—or rather the Argand money—for I don't believe Canter and his set own the stock at all. I'll bet a thousand dollars that every share is up as collateral in old Argand's bank."

"Oh! Well, it's all the same thing. They stand in together. They run the bank—the bank lends money;

they buy the stock and put it up for the loan, and then run the road."

"And us," chipped in the other; for they had now gotten into a high good-humor with each other—"they get our franchises and our money, and then side-track us without breakfast while they go sailing by—in cars that they call theirs, but which we pay for. I do think we are the biggest fools!"

"That's Socialistic!" said his friend again. "You've been reading that fellow's articles in the Sunday papers. What's his name?"

"No, I've been thinking. I don't care what it is, it's the truth, and I'm tired of it."

"They say he's a Jew," interrupted the former.

"I don't care what he is, it's the truth," asserted the other doggedly.

"Well, I rather think it is," agreed his friend; "but then, I'm hungry, and there isn't even any water on the car."

"And they guzzle champagne!" sneered the other, "which we pay for," he added.

"You're a stockholder?"

"Yes, in a small way; but I might as well own stock in a paving-company to Hell. My father helped to build this road and used to take great pride in it. They used to give the stockholders then a free ride once a year to the annual meeting, and it made them all feel as if they owned the road."

"But now they give free passes not to the stockholders, but to the legislators and the judges."

"It pays better," said his friend, and they both laughed. It appeared, indeed, rather a good joke to them —or, at least, there was nothing which they could do about it, so they might as well take it good-humoredly.

By this time I had learned that my neighbor with the five children was the wife of a man named McNeil, who was a journeyman machinist, but had been thrown out of work by a strike in another city, and, after waiting around for months, had gone North to find employment, and having at last gotten it, had now sent for them to come on. She had not seen him for months, and she was looking forward to it now with a happiness that was quite touching. Even the discomforts of the night could not dull her joy in the anticipation of meeting her husband—and she constantly enheartened her droopy little brood with the prospect of soon seeing their "dear Daddy."

Finally after midday we arrived.

I shall never forget the sight and smells of that station, if I live to be a thousand years old. It seemed to me a sort of temporary resting-place for lost souls—and I was one of them. Had Dante known it, he must have pictured it, with its reek and grime. The procession of tired, bedraggled travellers that streamed in through the black gateways to meet worn watchers with wan smiles on their tired faces, or to look anxiously and in vain for friends who had not come, or else who had come and gone. And outside the roar of the grimy current that swept through the black street.

I had no one to look for; so, after helping my neighbor

and her frowsy little brood off, I sauntered along with Dix at my heel, feeling about as lonely as a man can feel on this populated earth. After gazing about and refusing sternly to meet the eye of any of the numerous cabmen who wildly waved their whips toward me, shouting: "Kebsuh—kebsuh—keb—keb—keb?" with wearying iteration, I had about made up my mind to take the least noisy of them, when I became conscious that my fellow-traveller, Mrs. McNeil with her little clan, was passing out of the station unescorted and was looking about in a sort of lost way. On my speaking to her, her face brightened for a moment, but clouded again instantly, as she said, "Oh! sir, he's gone! He came to meet me this morning; but the train was late and he couldn't wait or he'd lose his job, so he had to go, and the kind man at the gate told me he left the message for me. But however shall I get there with all the children, for I haven't a cent left!"

The tears welled up in her eyes as she came to her sad little confession. And I said, "Oh! Well, I think we can manage it somehow. You have his address?'

"Oh! yes, sir, I have it here," and she pulled out an empty little pocket-book from the breast of her worn frock, and while she gave the baby to the eldest girl to hold, tremblingly opened the purse. In it was only a crumpled letter and, besides this, a key—these were all. She opened the letter tenderly and handed it to me. I read the address and fastened it in my memory.

"Now." I said, "we'll straighten this out directly.' I turned and called a hackman. "I want a carriage."

There was a rush, but I was firm and insisted on a hack. However, as none was to be had, I was fain to content myself with a one-horse cab of much greater age than dimension.

Bundling them in and directing the driver to go around and get the trunk from the baggage-room, I mounted beside him and took Dix between my feet and one of the children in my arms, and thus made my entry into the city of my future home. My loneliness had somehow disappeared.

My protégée's destination turned out to be a long way off, quite in one of the suburbs of the city, where working people had their little homes—a region I was to become better acquainted with later. As we began to pass bakeries and cook-shops, the children began once more to clamor to their mother for something to eat, on which the poor thing tried to quiet them with promises of what they should have when they reached home. But I could perceive that her heart was low within her, and I stopped at a cook-shop and bought a liberal allowance of bread and jam and cookies, on which the young things fell to like famished wolves, while their mother overwhelmed me with blessings.

We had not gone far, and were still in the centre of the city, when a handsome open carriage drove by us, and as it passed, there sat in it the young lady I had seen on the train, with a pleasant looking elderly man, whom I conjectured to be her father, and who appeared in a very good-humor with her or himself. As I was gazing at them, her eyes fell full into mine, and after a

half-moment's mystification, she recognized me as I lifted my hat, and her face lit up with a pleasant smile of recognition. I found my feelings divided between pleasure at her sweet return of my bow and chagrin that she should find me in such a predicament; for I knew what a ridiculous figure I must cut with the dog between my feet and a frowsy child, thickly smeared with jam, in my arms. In fact, I could see that the girl was talking and laughing spiritedly with her father, evidently about us. I confess to a feeling of shame at the figure I must cut, and I wondered if she would not think I had lied to her in saying that I had never met them before. I did not know that the smile had been for Dix.

When we reached, after a good hour's drive, the little street for which we were bound, I found my forecast fairly correct. The dingy little house, on which was the rusted number given Mrs. McNeil in her husband's letter, was shut up and bore no evidence of having been opened, except a small flower-pot with a sprig of green in it in a dusty, shutterless window. It was the sort of house that is a stove in summer and an ice-box in the winter. And there was a whole street of them. After we had knocked several times and I had tried to peep over the fence at the end of the street, the door of an adjoining tenement opened, and a slatternly, middle-aged woman peeped out.

"Are you Mrs. McNeil?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Well, here's your key. Your man told me to tell you 't if you came while he was at work, you'd find

something to eat in the back room 't he'd cooked this mornin' before he went to work. The train was late, he said, and he couldn't wait; but he'd be home tonight, and he'd bring some coal when he came. What a fine lot o' children you have. They ought to keep you in cinders and wood. I wish I had some as big as that; but mine are all little. My two eldest died of scarlet fever two years ago. Drainage, they said."

She had come out and unlocked the door and was now turning away.

"I think your man had someone to take the upstairs front room; but he didn't come—you'll have to get someone to do it and you double up. The Argand Estate charges such rent, we all have to do that. Well, if I can help you, I'm right here."

I was struck by her kindness to the forlorn stranger, and the latter's touching recognition of it, expressed more in looks and in tone than in words.

Having helped them into the house, which was substantially empty, only one room having even a pretence of furniture in it, and that merely a bed, a mattress and a broken stove, I gave the poor woman a little of my slender stock of money and left her murmuring her thanks and assurances that I had already done too much for them. In fact, I had done nothing.

As my finances were very low, I determined to find a boarding-house instead of wasting them at a hotel. I accordingly stopped at a sizable house which I recognized as a boarding-house on a street in a neighborhood

which might, from the old houses with their handsome doors and windows, have once been fashionable, though fashion had long since taken its flight to a newer and gaudier part of the town, and the mansions were now giving place to shops and small grocers' markets. A wide door with a fan-shaped transom gave it dignity. A large wistaria vine coiled up to the top of a somewhat dilapidated porch with classical pillars lent it distinction. The landlady, Mrs. Kale, a pleasant looking, kindly woman, offered me a small back-room on reasonable terms, it being, as she said, the dull season; and, having arranged for Dix in a dingy little livery stable near by, I took it "temporarily," till I could look around.

I found the company somewhat nondescript—ranging all the way from old ladies with false fronts and cracked voices to uppish young travelling men and their rather sad-looking wives.

Among the boarders, the two who interested me most were two elderly ladies, sisters, whose acquaintance I made the day after my arrival. They did not take their meals at the common table, but, as I understood, in their own apartment in the third story. They were a quaint and pathetic pair, very meagre, very shabby, and manifestly very poor. There was an air of mystery about them, and Mrs. Kale treated them with a respect which she paid to no others of her variegated household. They occasionally honored the sitting-room with their presence on Sunday evenings, by Mrs. Kale's especial invitation, and I was much diverted with them. They were

known as the Miss Tippses; but Mrs. Kale always spoke of them as "Miss Pansy" and "Miss Pinky." It seems that she had known them in her youth, "back East."

My acquaintance with the two old ladies at this time was entirely accidental. The morning after my arrival, as I started out to look around for an office, and also to take Dix for a walk, as well as to take a look at the city, I fell in with two quaint-looking old women who slipped out of the door just ahead of me, one of them slightly lame, and each with a large bundle in her arms. They were dressed in rusty black, and each wore a veil, which quite concealed her features. But as they limped along, engaged in an animated conversation, their voices were so refined as to arrest my attention, and I was guilty of the impropriety of listening to them, partly out of sheer idleness, and partly because I wanted to know something of my boarding-house and of my fellow boarders. They were talking about a ball of the night before, an account of which they had read in the papers, or rather, as I learned, in a copy of a paper which they had borrowed, and they were as much interested in it as if they had been there themselves. "Oh, wouldn't you have liked to see it?" said one. "It must have been beautiful. I should have liked to see Miss——" (I could not catch the name). "She must have been exquisite in chiffon and lace. She is so lovely anyhow. I did not know she had returned."

"I wonder Mr. —— did not tell us." Again I failed to hear the name.

"For a very good reason, I suppose. He did not know."

"He is dead in love with her."

"Oh, you are so romantic!" said the other, whom I took from her figure and her feebleness to be the elder of the two.

"No; but any one can tell that at a glance."

"What a pity he could not marry her. Then we should be sure to see her as a bride."

The other laughed. "What an idea! We have nothing fit to go even to the church in."

"Why, we could go in the gallery. Oh, this bundle is so heavy! I don't believe I can ever get there to- day."

"Oh, yes, you can. Now come on. Don't give up. Here, rest it on the fence a moment."

As the lame one attempted to lift the bundle to rest it on the fence, it slipped to the ground, and she gave a little exclamation of fear.

"Oh, dear! suppose it should get soiled!"

I stepped forward and lifted it for her, and to my surprise found it very heavy. Then, as they thanked me, it occurred to me to offer to carry the bundle for them to the street car for which I supposed them bound. There was a little demur, and I added, "I am at Mrs. Kale's also. I have just come." This appeared to relieve one of them at least, but the other said, "Oh, but we are not going to the street car. We don't ride in street cars."

"Yes; it is so unhealthy," said the younger one. "People catch all sorts of diseases on the car."

Thinking them rather airy, I was about to hand the bundle back, but as I was going their way I offered to carry the bundles for both of them as far as I was going. This proved to be quite twenty blocks, for I could not in decency return the bundles. So we went on together, I feeling at heart rather ashamed to be lugging two large bundles through the streets for two very shabby-looking old women whose names I did not know. We soon, however, began to talk, and I drew out from them a good deal about Mrs. Kale and her kindness. Also, that they had seen much better days, to which one of them particularly was very fond of referring. It seemed that they had lived East—they carefully guarded the exact place—and had once had interests in a railroad which their father had built and largely owned. They were manifestly anxious to make this clearly understood. After his death they had lived on their dividends, until, on a sudden, the dividends had stopped. They found that the railroad with which their road connected had passed into new hands—had been "bought up" by a great syndicate, their lawyer had informed them, and refused any longer to make traffic arrangements with the road. This had destroyed the value of their property, but they had refused to sell their holdings at the low price offered—"As we probably ought to have done," sighed one of them.

"Not at all! I am glad we didn't," asserted the other.

"Well, sister, we got nothing—we lost everything, didn't we?"

"I don't know. I am only glad that we held out. That man knows that he robbed us."

"Well, that doesn't help us."

"Yes, it does. It helps me to know that he knows it."

"Who was it?" I asked.

"Oh, there was a syndicate. I only know the names of two of them—a man named Argand, and a man named Canter. And our lawyer was named McSheen."

Argand was a name which I recalled in connection with Mr. Poole's interest in the Railways in the case I have mentioned.

"Well, you held on to your stock. You have it now, then?" I foresaw a possible law-case against Argand, and wondered if he was the owner of the Argand Estate, which I had already heard of twice since my arrival.

"No," said one of them, "they bought up the stock of all the other people, and then they did something which cut us out entirely. What was it they did, sister?"

"Reorganized."

"And then we came on here to see about it, and spent everything else that we had in trying to get it back, but we lost our case, And since then——"

"Well, sister, we are keeping the gentleman. Thank you very much," said the younger of the two quickly, to which her sister added her thanks as well. I insisted at first on going further with them, but seeing that they were evidently anxious to be rid of me, I gave them their bundles and passed on.

Among the boarders one of those I found most interesting was a young man named Kalender, by whom I sat at the first meal after my arrival, and with whom I struck up an acquaintance. He was a reporter for a morning paper of very advanced methods, and he was pre-eminently a person fitted for his position: a cocky youth with a long, keen nose and a bullet head covered with rather wiry, black hair, heavy black brows over keen black eyes, and an ugly mouth with rather small yellowish teeth. He had as absolute confidence in himself as any youth I ever met, and he either had, or made a good pretence of having, an intimate knowledge of not only all the public affairs of the city, but of the private affairs of every one in the city. Before we had finished smoking our cigarettes he had given me what he termed "the lay out" of the entire community, and by his account it was "the rottenest —— town in the universe"—a view I subsequently had reason to rectify —and he proposed to get out of it as soon as he could and go to New York, which, to his mind, was the only town worth living in in the country (he having, as I learned later, lived there just three weeks).

His paper, he said frankly, paid only for sensational articles, and was just then "jumping on a lot of the high-flyers, because that paid," but "they" gave him a latitude to write up whatever he pleased, because they knew he could dress up anything—from a murder to a missionary meeting. "Oh! it don't matter what you write about," said he airily, "so you know how to do it"—a bit of criticism suggestive of a better-known critic.

I was much impressed by his extraordinary and extensive experience. In the course of our conversation I mentioned casually the episode of the delayed train and the private car.

"The Argands' car, you say?"

I told him that that was what some one had said.

"That would make a good story," he declared. "I think I'll write that up—I'd have all the babies dying and the mothers fainting and an accident just barely averted by a little girl waving a red shawl, see—while the Argand car dashed by with a party eating and drinking and throwing champagne-bottles out of the window. But I've got to go and see the Mayor to ascertain why he appointed the new city comptroller, and then I've got to drop by the theatre and give the new play a roast—so I'll hardly have time to roast those Argands and Leighs, though I'd like to do it to teach them not to refuse me round-trip passes next time I ask for them. I tell you what you do," he added, modestly, "you write it up—you say you have written for the press?"

"Oh! yes, very often—and for the magazines. I have had stories published in——"

"Well, that's all right. (Kalender was not a good listener.) I'll look it over and touch it up—put the fire in it and polish it off. You write it up, say—about a column. I can cut it down all right—and I'll call by here for it about eleven, after the theatre.

It was a cool request—coolly made; but I was fool enough to accede to it. I felt much aggrieved over the

treatment of us by the railway company, and was not sorry to air my grievance at the same time that I secured a possible opening. I accordingly spent all the afternoon writing my account of the inconvenience and distress occasioned the travelling public by the inconsiderateness of the railway management, discussing, by the way, the fundamental principle of ownership in quasi-public corporations, and showing that all rights which they claimed were derived from the people. I mentioned no names and veiled my allusions; but I paid a tribute to the kind heart of the Angel of Mercy who succored the children. I spent some hours at my composition and took much pride in it when completed. Then, as I had not been out at all to see the town, I addressed the envelope in which I had placed my story to Mr. Kalender, and leaving it for him, walked out into the wilderness.

On my return the paper was gone.

Next morning I picked up one paper after another, but did not at first find my contribution. An account of a grand ball the night before, at which an extraordinary display of wealth must have been made, was given the prominent place in most of them. But as I did not know the persons whose costumes were described with such Byzantine richness of vocabulary, I passed it by. The only thing referring to a railway journey was a column article, in a sensational sheet called *The Trumpet*, headed, BRUTALITY OF MILLIONAIRE BANKER. RAILWAY PRESIDENT STARVES POOR PASSENGERS. There under these glaring

headlines, I at last discovered my article, so distorted and mutilated as to be scarcely recognizable. The main facts of the delay and its cause were there as I wrote them. My discussion of derivative rights was retained. But the motive was boldly declared to be brutal hatred of the poor. And to make it worse, the names of both Mr. Leigh and Mrs. Argand were given as having been present in person, gloating over the misery they had caused, while a young lady, whose name was not given, had thrown scraps out of the window for starving children and dogs to scramble for.

To say that I was angry expresses but a small part of the truth. The allusion to the young lady had made my blood boil. What would she think if she should know I had had a hand in that paper? I waited at red heat for my young man, and had he appeared before I cooled down, he would have paid for the liberty he took with me. When he did appear, however, he was so innocent of having offended me that I could scarcely bear to attack him.

"Well, did you see our story?" he asked gayly.

"Yes—your story—I saw——"

"Well, I had to do a little to it to make it go," he said condescendingly, "but you did very well—you'll learn."

"Thank you. I don't want to learn that," I said hotly, "I never saw anything so butchered. There was not the slightest foundation for all that rot—it was made up out of whole cloth." I was boiling about Miss Leigh.

"Pooh-pooh! My dear boy, you'll never make an editor. "I never fake an interview," he said virtuously. "Lots of fellows do; but I don't. But if a man will give me two lines, I can give him two columns—and good ones, too. Why, we had two extras—what with that and the grand ball last night. The newsboys are crying it all over town."

"I don't care if they are. I don't want to be an editor if one has to tell such atrocious lies as that. But I don't believe editors have to do that, and I know reputable editors don't. Why, you have named a man who was a hundred miles away."

He simply laughed.

"Well, I'm quite willing to get the credit of that paper. That's business. We're trying to break down the Leigh interests, and the Argands are mixed up with 'em. Coll McSheen was in the office last night. He's counsel for the Argands, but—you don't know Coll McSheen?"

"I do not," I said shortly.

"He's deep. You know you write better than you talk," he added patronizingly. "I tell you what I'll do—if you'll write me every day on some live topic——"

"I'll never write you a line again on any topic, alive or dead, unless you die yourself, when I'll write that you are the biggest liar I ever saw except my Jeams."

I had expected he would resent my words, but he did not. He only laughed, and said, "That's a good line. Write on that."

I learned later that he had had a slight raise of salary on the paper he palmed off as his. I could only console

myself with the hope that Miss Leigh would not see the article.

But Miss Leigh did see the appreciation of her father in the writing of which I had had a hand, and it cost me many a dark hour of sad repining.

X

A NEW GIRL

This is how the young lady heard of it. Miss Leigh had been at home but an hour or two and had only had time to change her travelling costume for a suit of light blue with a blue hat to match, which was very becoming to her, and order the carriage to drive down and get her father, when a visitor was announced: Miss Milly McSheen, an old schoolmate—and next moment a rather large, flamboyante girl of about Miss Leigh's own age or possibly a year or two older, bounced into the room as if she had been shot in out of one of those mediæval engines which flung men into walled towns.

She began to talk volubly even before she was actually in the room; she talked all through her energetic if hasty embrace of her friend, and all the time she was loosening the somewhat complicated fastening of a dotted veil which, while it obscured, added a certain charm to a round, florid, commonplace, but good-humored face in which smiled two round, shallow blue eyes.

"Well, my dear," she began while yet outside the door, "I thought you never were coming back! Never! And I believe if I hadn't finally made up my mind to get you back you would have stayed forever in that nasty, stuck-up city of Brotherly Love."

Miss Leigh a little airily observed that that title applied to Philadelphia, and she had only passed through Philadelphia on a train one night.

"Oh! well, it was some kind of love, I'll be bound, and some one's else brother, too, that kept you away so long."

"No, it was not—not even some one else's brother," replied Miss Leigh.

"Oh! for Heaven's sake, don't tell me that's wrong. Why, I've been practising that all summer. It sounds so grammatical—so New Yorkish."

"I can't help it. It may be New Yorkish, but it isn't grammatical," said Miss Leigh. "But I never expected to get back earlier. My Aunt had to look into some of her affairs in the East and had to settle some matters with a lawyer down South, a friend of my father's—an old gentleman who used to be one of her husband's partners and is her trustee or something, and I had to wait till they got matters settled."

"Well, I'm glad you are here in time. I was so afraid you wouldn't be, that I got Pa to telegraph and have your car put on the president's special train that was coming through and had the right-of-way. I told him that I didn't see that because your father had resigned from the directory was any reason why you shouldn't be brought on the train."

"Were we indebted to you for that attention?" Eleanor Leigh's voice had a tone of half incredulity.

"Yep—I am the power behind the throne just at present. Pa and old Mr. Canter have buried the

hatchet and are as thick as thieves since their new deal, and Jim Canter told me his car was coming through on a special. Oh! you ought to hear him the way he says, *My car*, and throws his chest out! So I said I wanted him to find out where you were on the road—on what train, I mean—and pick you up, and he said he would."

"Oh! I see," said Miss Leigh, looking somewhat annoyed.

"He did, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, you know Jim Canter is a very promising young man, much more so than he is a fulfiller. What are you so serious about? You look as——"

"Nothing—only I don't wish to be beholden to—I was just wondering what right we have to stop trains full of people who have paid for their tickets and——"

"What!" exclaimed the other girl in astonishment, "what right? Why, our fathers are directors, aren't they—at least, my father is—and own a block of the stock that controls——?"

"Yes; but all these people—who pay—and who had no breakfast?"

"Oh! don't you worry about them—they'll get along somehow—and if they pay they'll look out for themselves without your doing it. My way is to make all I can out of them and enjoy it while I can—that's what Pa says."

"Yes," said Miss Leigh acquiescingly, "but I'm not sure that it's right."

"You've been reading that man's articles," declared Miss McSheen. "I know—I have, too—everybody has —all the girls. I am a socialist—aren't they terribly striking! He's so good-looking. Pa says he's a Jew and an anarchist, and ought to be in jail."

"Are you speaking of Mr. Wolffert?"

"Yes, of course. Now you need not make out you don't know him; because they say——"

"Yes, I know him very well," said Miss Leigh, so stiffly that her guest paused and changed her tone.

"Well, anyhow, my dear, you are just in time. We are going to have the biggest thing we've ever had in this town. I've almost died laughing over it already."

"What is it?"

"Wait. I'm going to tell you all about it. You know it was all my idea. Harriet Minturn claims the whole credit for it now that I've made it go—says she first suggested it, and I assure you, my dear, she never opened her head about it till I had all the girls wild about it, and had arranged for the costumes and had gotten the Count to promise——"

"What is it?" interrupted her hostess again, laughing.

"Wait, my dear, I'm going to tell you all about it. The Count's a socialist, too. He says he is—but you mustn't tell that; he told me in the strictest confidence. Well, the Count's to go as courtier of the court of—what's the name of that old king or emperor, or whatever he was, that conquered that country—you know what I mean——"

"No, indeed, I do not—and I haven't the least idea what you are talking about."

"Oh! pshaw! I know perfectly well, and you do, too. The Count bet me I'd forget it and I bet him a gold cigar-holder I wouldn't—what *is* his name? Won't the Count look handsome with lace ruffles and gold braid all over his chest and coat-tails, and a cocked hat. He's been showing me the way they dance in his country. I almost died laughing over it—only it makes me so dizzy, they never reverse—just whirl and whirl and whirl. You know he's a real count? Yes, my father's taken the trouble to hunt that up. He said he wasn't 'going to let a d——d dago come around me without anybody knowing who or what he is.' Ain't that like Pa?"

"I—I—don't think I ever met your father," said Eleanor stiffly.

"Oh! that's a fact. Well, 'tis—'tis just exactly like him. As soon as the Count began to come around our house—a good deal—I mean, really, quite a good deal—you understand?" said the girl, tossing her blonde head, "what must Pa do but go to work and hunt him up. He thinks Jim Canter is a winner, but I tell him Jimmy's bespoke." She looked at her hostess archly.

"What did he find out?" inquired Miss Leigh coldly, "and how did he do it?"

"Why, he just ran him down," explained the girl easily, "just as he does anybody he wants to know about—put a man on him, you know."

"Oh! I see." Miss Leigh froze up a little; but the other girl did not notice it.

"Only this one was somebody on the other side, of course, and he found out that he's all right. He's a real count. He's the third son of Count Pushkin, who was —let me see—a counsellor of his emperor, the Emperor of Sweden."

"I didn't know they had an emperor in Sweden. He's a new one."

"Haven't they? Oh! well, maybe it was the King of Sweden, or the Emperor of Russia—I don't know—they are all alike to me. I never could keep them apart, even at Miss de Pense's. I only know he's a real count, and I won a hundred dollars from Pa on a bet that he was. And he hated to pay it! He bet that he was a cook or a barber. And I bet he wasn't. And, oh! you know it's an awfully good joke on him—for he was a waiter in New York for a while."

"A what?"

"A waiter—oh, just for a little while after he came over—before his remittances arrived. But I made Pa pay up, because he said cook or barber. I put it in this hat, see, ain't it a wonder?" She turned herself around before a mirror and admired her hat which was, indeed as Miss Leigh was forced to admit, "a wonder."

"You know it's just like the hat Gabrielle Lightfoot wears in the 'Star of the Harem' when she comes in in the balloon. I got her to let me copy it—exactly."

"You did? How did you manage that?"

"Why, you see, Jimmy Canter knows her, and he asked Harriet and me to supper to meet her, and I declare she nearly made me die laughing—you know she's a real sweet girl—Jimmy says she——"

"Who chaperoned you?" asked Miss Leigh, as she began to put on her gloves.

"Chaperon? My dear, that's where the fun came in—we didn't have any chaperon. I pretended that Harriet and the Count were married and called her Countess, and she was so flattered at being given the title that she was pleased to death—though you know, she's really dead in love with Jimmy Canter, and he hardly looks at her. If he's in love with any one—except Mr. James Canter, Jr.—it's with some one else I know." She nodded her head knowingly.

"I'm afraid I have to go now," said Miss Leigh, "my father expects me to come for him," she glanced at a jewelled watch. She had stiffened up slightly.

"Well, of course, you'll come?"

"To what?"

"To our ball—that's what it is, you know, though it's for a charity, and we make others pay for it. Why shouldn't they? I haven't decided yet what charity. Harriet wants it to be for a home for cats. You'd know she'd want that now, wouldn't you? She'll be in there herself some day. But I'm not going to let it go for anything she wants. She's claiming now that she got it up, and I'm just going to show her who did. I'm thinking of giving it to that young preacher you met in the country two years ago and got so interested

in 't you got Dr. Capon to bring him here as his assistant."

"You couldn't give it to a better cause," said Miss Leigh. "I wonder how he is coming on?"

"I guess you know all right. But Pa says," pursued Miss McSheen without heeding further the interruption, "we are ruining the poor, and the reason they won't work is that we are always giving them money. You know they're striking on our lines—some of them? I haven't decided yet what to give it to. Oh! you ought to see the Doctor. He's the gayest of the gay. He came to see me the other day. It almost made me die laughing. You know he's dead in love with your Aunt. I used to think it was you; but Pa says I'm always thinking everybody is in love with you—even the Count—but he says— However——"

"I'll tell you what!" said Miss Leigh suddenly, "I'll come to the ball if you'll give the proceeds to Mr. Marvel for his poor people."

"Done! See there! what did I tell you! I thought you weren't so pious for nothing all on a sudden——"

"Milly, you're a goose," said Miss Leigh, picking up her sunshade.

"I'm a wise one, though—what was it our teacher used to tell us about the geese giving the alarm somewhere? But I don't care. I'm the treasurer and pay the bills. Pa says the man that holds the bag gets the swag. Bring your father. We'll get something grand out of him. He always gives to everything. I'll call him up and tell him to be sure and come. You know they've

landed the deal. Pa says every one of them has made a pile. Your father might have made it, too, if he'd come in, but I think he was fighting them or something, I don't quite understand it—anyhow it's all done now, and I'm going to hold Pa up for the pearl necklace he promised to give me. There's a perfect beauty at Setter & Stoneberg's, only seventeen thousand, and I believe they'll take ten if it's planked down in cold cash. Pa says the way to get a man is to put down the cold cash before him and let him fasten his eye on it. If he's a Jew he says he'll never let it go. I tell him by the same token he must be a Jew himself; because he holds on to all the money he ever lays his eye on."

"Can I take you down-town anywhere?" inquired Miss Leigh, in a rather neutral voice.

"No, my dear, just let me fix my hat. I have to go the other way. In fact, I told the Count that I was going up to the park for a little spin, and he asked if he couldn't come along. I didn't want him, of course —men are so in the way in the morning, don't you think so? Is that quite right?" She gave her head a toss to test the steadiness of her hat.

"Quite," said Miss Leigh.

"Well, good-by. I'll count on you then. Oh! I tell you—among the entertainments, the Count is going to perform some wonderful sleight-of-hand tricks with cards. My dear, he's a magician! He can do anything with cards. Heavens! it's after one. The Count—good-by—good-by."

And as Miss Leigh entered her victoria the young

lady rushed off, up the street, straining her eyes in the direction of the park.

That night "the ball," as Miss McSheen called it, came off and was a huge success, as was duly chronicled in all the morning papers next day with an elaboration of description of millinery in exact proportion to the degree of prominence of the wearer in the particular circle in which the editor or his reporter moved or aspired to move. Mrs. Argand stood first in "Wine-colored velvet, priceless lace," of the sort that reporters of the female sex deem dearest, and "diamonds and rubies" that would have staggered Sinbad, the sailor. Miss McSheen ran her a close second, in "rose-colored satin, and sapphires," spoken of as "priceless heirlooms." Miss Leigh shone lower down in "chiffon, lace, and pearls of great price." So they went columnsfull, all priceless, all beautiful, all superlative, till superlatives were exhausted, and the imagination of the reporters ran riot in an excess of tawdry color and English.

Among the men especially lauded were, first, a certain Mr. James Canter, son and partner of "the famous Mr. Canter, the capitalist and financier," who gave promise of rivalling his father in his "notorious ability," and, secondly, a Count Pushkin, the "distinguished scion of a noble house of international reputation who was honoring the city with his distinguished presence, and was generally credited with having led captive the heart of one of the city's fairest and wealthiest daughters." So ran the record. And having nothing to do, I read that

morning the account and dwelt on the only name I recognized, the young lady of the white chiffon and pearls, and wondered who the men were whose names stood next to hers.

XI

ELEANOR LEIGH

Miss Leigh also read the papers that morning and with much amusement till in one of them—the most sensational of all the morning journals—she came on an article which first made her heart stop beating and then set it to racing with sheer anger. To think that such a slander could be uttered! She would have liked to make mince-meat of that editor. He was always attacking her father.

A little later she began to think of the rest of the article! What was the truth? Did they have the right to stop the train and hold it back? This sort of thing was what a writer whom she knew denied in a series of papers which a friend of hers, a young clergyman who worked among the poor, had sent her and which the press generally was denouncing.

She had for some time been reading these papers that had been appearing in the press periodically. They were written by a person who was generally spoken of as "a Jew," but who wrote with a pen which had the point of a rapier, and whose sentences ate into the steely plate of artificial convention like an acid. One of the things he had said had stuck in her memory. "As the remains of animalculæ of past ages furnish, when compressed in almost infinite numbers, the lime-food on which the bone and muscle of the present race

of cattle in limestone regions are built up, so the present big-boned race of the wealthy class live on the multitudinous class of the poor."

The summer before she had met the writer of these articles and he had made an impression on her which had not been effaced. She had not analyzed her feelings to ascertain how far this impression was due to his classical face, his deep, luminous eyes, and his impassioned manner, yet certain it is that all of these had struck her.

Perhaps, I should give just here a little more of Miss Eleanor Leigh's history as I came to know of it later on. How I came to know of it may or may not be divulged later. But, at least, I learned it. She was the daughter of a gentleman who, until she came and began to tyrannize over him, gave up all of his time and talents to building up enterprises of magnitude and amassing a fortune. He had showed abilities and ambition at college "back East," where he came from, and when he first struck for the West and started out in life, it was in a region and amid surroundings which were just becoming of more than local importance as they a little later grew under the guidance of men of action like himself, to be of more than sectional importance. The new West as it was then had called to him imperiously and he had responded. Flinging himself into the current which was just beginning to take on force, he soon became one of the pilots of the development which, changing a vast region where roamed Indians and buffalo into a land of cities and railways, shortly made its mark on the Nation and, indeed, on the

world, and he was before long swept quite away by it, leaving behind all the intellectual ambitions and dreams he had ever cherished and giving himself up soul and body to the pleasure he got out of his success as an organizer and administrator of large enterprises. Wealth at first was important to him, then it became, if not unimportant, at least of secondary importance to the power he possessed. Then it became of importance again—indeed of supreme importance; for the power he wielded was now dependent on wealth and great wealth. His associates were all men of large interests, and only one with similar interests could lead them. New conditions had come about of late and new methods which he could neither employ nor contend against successfully.

As he looked back on it later it appeared a feverish dream through which he had passed Its rewards were undeniable: luxury, reputation and power beyond anything he had ever conceived of. Yet what had he not sacrificed for them! Everything that he had once held up before his mind as a noble ambition: study, reading, association with the great and noble of all time; art and love of art; appreciation of all except wealth that men have striven for through the ages; friendship—domestic joy—everything except riches and the power they bring. For as he thought over his past in his growing loneliness he found himself compelled to admit that he had sacrificed all the rest. He had married a woman he loved and admired. He had given her wealth and luxury instead of himself, and she had pined and died before he

awakened to the tragic fact. He had grieved for her, but he could not conceal from himself the brutal fact that she had ceased years before to be to him as necessary as his business. She had left him one child. Two others had died in infancy, and he had mourned for them and sympathized with her; but he never knew for years, and until too late, how stricken she had been over their loss. The child she had left him had in some way taken hold on him and had held it even against himself. She had so much of himself in her that he himself could see the resemblance; his natural kindness, his good impulses, his wilfulness, his resolution and ambition to lead and to succeed in all he undertook.

Even from the earliest days when she was left to him, Mr. Leigh was made aware by Eleanor that he had something out of the ordinary to deal with. The arrangement by which, on the death of her mother, she was taken by her half-aunt, Mrs. Argand, to be cared for, "because the poor child needed a mother to look after her," fell through promptly when the little thing who had rebelled at the plan appeared, dusty and dishevelled but triumphant, in her father's home that first evening, as he was preparing, after leaving his office, to go and see her. It was doubtless an auspicious moment for the little rebel; for her father was at the instant steeped in grief and loneliness and self-reproach. He had worked like fury all day to try to forget his loss; but his return home to his empty house had torn open his wounds afresh, and the echoing of his solitary footfall on the stair and in the vacant rooms had almost

driven him to despair. Every spot—every turn was a red-hot brand on the fresh wound. No man had loved his wife more; but he awoke now when too late to the torturing fact that he had left her much alone. He had worked for her, leaving the enjoyment to the future; and she had died before the future came, in that desolate present which was to be linked forever to the irretrievable past. It was at this moment that he heard a familiar step outside his door. His heart almost stopped to listen. It could not be Eleanor—she was safe at her Aunt's, blocks away, awaiting the fulfilment of his promise to come to see her—and it was now dark. Could it be a delusion? His over-wrought brain might have fancied it. Next second the door burst open, and in rushed Eleanor with a cry—"Oh! Papa!"

"Why, Nelly! How did you come!"

"Slipped out and ran away! You did not come and I could not stay."

When the emotion of the first greeting was over, Mr. Leigh, under the strong sense of what he deemed his duty to the child, and also to the dear dead—which had led him at first to make the sacrifice of yielding to his sister-in-law's urgency, began to explain to the little girl the impropriety of her action, and the importance of her returning to her Aunt, when she had been so kind. But he found it a difficult task. Mr. Leigh believed in discipline. He had been brought up in a rigid school, and he knew it made for character; but it was uphill work with the little girl's arms clasped about his neck and her hot, tear-streaked little face pressed close to his

as she pleaded and met his arguments with a promptness and an aptness which astonished him. Moreover, she had a strong advocate in his own heart, and from the first moment when she had burst in on his heart-breaking loneliness he had felt that he could not let her go again if she were unhappy.

"She would not go back," she asserted defiantly. "She hated her Aunt, anyhow—she was a hateful old woman who scolded her servants; and sent her up-stairs to her supper."

When to this her father promptly replied that she must go back, and he would take her, she as promptly changed her note.

"Very well, she would go back; he need not come with her; but she would die."

"Oh, no, you will not die. You will soon grow very fond of her."

"Then I shall grow very worldly, like her," said Miss Precocity.

"What makes you think that?"

"Because she is a worldly old woman—and you said so yourself."

"I said so! When?" demanded her father, with a guilty feeling of vague recollection.

"To Mamma once—when Mamma said something against her husband, you said that, and Mamma said you ought not to say that about her sister—and you said she was only her half-sister, anyhow, and not a bit like her—and now you want to send me back to her as if I were only your half-child."

The father smiled sadly enough as he drew the anxious little face close to his own.

"Oh! no—You are all mine, and my all. I only want to do what is right."

"Mamma wants me to stay with you—so it must be right."

The present tense used by the child struck the father to the heart.

"What makes you think that?" he asked with a sigh. The little girl was quick to catch at the new hope.

"She told me so the day before she died, when I was in the room with her; she said you would be lonely, and I must be a comfort to you."

Mr. Leigh gave a gasp that was almost a groan, and the child flung her arms about his neck.

"And I sha'n't leave you, my all-Papa, unless you drive me; I promised Mamma I would stay and take care of you, and I will. And you won't make me—will you? For I am your all-daughter—You won't, will you?"

"No, d——d if I do!" said the father, catching her to his heart, and trying to smother the oath as it burst from his lips.

As soon as she had quieted down, he went to her Aunt's to make the necessary explanation. He found it not the easiest task, for the good lady had her own ideas and had formed her plans, and the change was a blow to her *amour propre*. It was, in fact, the beginning of the breach between Mr. Leigh and his sister-in-law which led eventually to the antagonism between them.

"You are going to spoil that child to death!" exclaimed the affronted lady. This Mr. Leigh denied, though in his heart he thought it possible. It was not a pleasant interview, for Mrs. Argand was deeply offended. But Mr. Leigh felt that it was well worth the cost when, on his return home, he was greeted by a cry of joy from the top of the stair where the little girl sat in her dressing gown awaiting him. And when with a cry of joy she came rushing down, Cinderella-like, dropping her slipper in her excitement, and flung herself into his arms, he knew that life had begun for him anew.

Mr. Leigh was quite aware of the truth of Mrs. Argand's prophecy; but he enjoyed the spoiling of his daughter, which she had foretold, and he enjoyed equally the small tyrannies which the child exercised over him, and also the development of her mind as the budding years passed.

"Papa," she said one day, when she had asked him to take her somewhere, and he had pleaded, "business," "why do you go to the office so much?"

"I have to work to make money for my daughter," said her father, stating the first reason that suggested itself.

"Are you not rich enough now?"

"Well, I don't know that I am, with a young lady growing up on my hands," said her father smiling.

"Am I very expensive?" she asked with a sudden little expression of gravity coming over her face.

"No, that you are not, my dear—and if you were, there is no pleasure on earth to me like giving it to you.

That is one of my chief reasons for working so steadily, though there are others."

"I have plenty of money," said Eleanor.

"Then you are happier than most people, who don't know when they have plenty."

"Yes—you see, all I have to do when I want anything is to go into a store and ask for it, and tell them I am your daughter, and they let me have it at once."

"Oh ho!" said her father, laughing, "so that is the way you buy things, is it? No wonder you have plenty. Well, you'd better come to me and ask for what you want."

"I think the other is the easier way, and as you say you like to give it to me, I don't see that it makes any difference."

Mr. Leigh decided that he had better explain the difference.

"I hate rich people," said Eleanor suddenly. "They are so vulgar."

"For example?" enquired her father looking with some amusement at the girl whose face had suddenly taken on an expression of severe priggishness.

"Oh! Aunt Sophia and Milly McSheen. They are always talking about their money."

Mr. Leigh's eyes were twinkling.

"You must not talk that way about your Aunt Sophia —she is very fond of you."

"She is always nagging at me—correcting me."

"She wants you to grow up to be a fine woman."

"Like her?" said Miss Eleanor pertly.

Mr. Leigh felt that it was wise to check this line of criticism, and he now spoke seriously.

"You must not be so critical of your Aunt. She is really very fond of you—and she was your mother's half-sister. You must respect her and love her."

"I love her, but I don't like her. She and Milly McSheen are just alike—always boasting of what they have, and do, and running down what others have, and do."

"Oh, well, it takes a great many people to make a world," said Mr. Leigh indulgently. Eleanor felt a want of sympathy and made another bid for it.

"Milly McSheen says that her father is going to be the richest man in this town."

"Ah! who is talking about money now?" said Mr. Leigh, laughing.

"I am not—I am merely saying what she said."

"You must not tell the silly things your friends say."

"No—only to you—I thought you said I must tell you everything. But, of course, if you don't wish me to—I won't."

Mr. Leigh laughed and took her on his knee. He was not quite sure whether she was serious or was only laughing at him, but, as he began to explain, she burst into a peal of merriment over her victory.

In appearance she was like her mother, only he thought her fairer—as fair as he had thought her mother in the days of his first devotion; and her deeper eyes and firmer features were an added beauty; the well-rounded chin was his own. Her eyes, deep with unfathomable

depths, and mouth, firm even with its delicate beauty, had come from some ancestor or ancestress who, in some generation past, had faced life in its most exacting form with undaunted resolution and, haply, had faced death with equal calm for some belief that now would scarcely have given an hour's questioning. So, when she grew each year, developing new powers and charm and constancy, he began to find a new interest in life, and to make her more his companion and confidante than he had ever made her mother. He left his business oftener to see her than he had left it to see her mother; he took her oftener with him on his trips, and took more trips, that he might have her company. She sat at the head of his table, and filled her place with an ability that was at once his astonishment and his pride.

At one time, as she changed from a mere child to a young girl, he had thought of marrying again, rather with a view to giving her a guide and counsellor than for any other purpose. Her storminess, however, at the mere suggestion, and much more, her real grief, had led him to defer the plan from time to time, until now she was a young lady, and he could see for himself that she needed neither chaperon nor counsellor. He sometimes smiled to think what the consequences would have been had he taken to wife the soft, kindly, rather commonplace lady whom he had once thought of as his daughter's guardian. A domestic fowl in the clutches of a young eagle would have had an easier time.

One phase alone in her development had puzzled and baffled him. She had gone off one spring to a country

neighborhood in another State, where she had some old relatives on her mother's side. Mr. Leigh had been called to Europe on business, and she had remained there until well into the summer. When she returned she was not the same. Some change had taken place in her. She had gone away a rollicking, gay, pleasure-loving, and rather selfish young girl—he was obliged to admit that she was both wilful and self-indulgent. Even his affection for her could not blind his eyes to this, and at times it had given him much concern, for at times there was a clash in which, if he came off victor, he felt it was at a perilous price—that, possibly, of a strain on her obedience. She returned a full-grown woman, thoughtful and self-sacrificing and with an aim—he was glad it was not a mission—and as her aim was to be useful, and she began with him, he accepted it with contentment. She talked freely of her visit; spoke warmly, and indeed, enthusiastically, of those she had met there. Among these were a young country preacher and a friend of his, a young Jew. But, though she spoke of both with respect, the praise she accorded them was so equal that he dismissed from his mind the possibility that she could have been seriously taken with either of them. Possibly, the Jew was the one she was most enthusiastic over, but she spoke of him too openly to cause her father disquietude. Besides, he was a Jew.

The preacher she plainly respected most highly, yet her account of his appearance was too humorous to admit a serious feeling for him, even though she had gotten him called to be one of Dr. Capon's assistants.

What had happened was that the girl, who had only "lain in the lilies and fed on the roses of life," had suddenly been dropped in an out-of-the-way corner in a country neighborhood in an old State, where there were neither lilies nor roses of the metaphorical kind, though a sufficiency of the real and natural kind, with which nature in compensatory mood atones to those who have of the metaphorical sort but thistles and brambles and flinty soil.

When she first landed there, after the very first excitement of being thrown into a wholly new situation, among strangers whom, though her relatives, she had always regarded much as she had regarded geographical places in distant lands, was over, she found herself, as it were, at a loss for occupation. Everything was so quiet and calm. She felt lost and somewhat bored. But after a little time she found occupation in small things, as on looking closely she discovered beauties in Nature which her first glance had failed to catch. The people appeared so novel, so simple, so wholly different from all whom she had known; the excitements and amusements and interests of her life in the city, or at summer watering-places, or in travelling, were not only unknown to them—as unknown as if they were in another planet, but were matters of absolute indifference. Their interest was in their neighbors, in the small happenings about them; and occurrences an hundred miles away were as distant to them as though they had taken place in another era. Among the few notabilities in this rural community was a young clergyman whom she always

heard spoken of with respect—as much respect, indeed, as if he had been a bishop. What "Mr. Marvel thought" and what he said was referred to, or was quoted as something to be considered—so much so that she had insensibly formed a picture in her own mind of a quite remarkable looking and impressive person. When, at last, she met John Marvel, what was her amusement to discover, in place of her young Antinous, a stout, strapping young fellow, with rather bristly hair, very near-sighted and awkward, and exceedingly shy, a person as far from a man of the world as a stout, country-bred cart-horse would be from a sleek trick-pony. His timidity in her presence caused her endless amusement, and for lack of some better diversion and partly to scandalize her staid kinswomen, she set herself to tease him in every way that her fertile brain could devise.

Visiting the young clergyman at the time was a friend who came much nearer being in appearance what Eleanor had imagined John Marvel to be: a dark, slender young man with a classical face, but that its lines were stronger and more deeply graven, and unforgettable eyes. He had just come to visit Mr. Marvel and to get a needed rest, John Marvel said. He had been a worker among the poor, and his views were so different from any that Eleanor Leigh had ever heard as to appear almost shocking. He was an educated man, yet he had lived and worked as an artisan. He was a gentleman, yet he denounced vehemently the conditions which produced the upper class. But an

even greater surprise awaited her when he announced that he was a Jew.

When John Marvel brought his friend to see Miss Eleanor Leigh, the first impression that she received was one of pleasure. He was so striking and unusual looking—with deep, burning eyes under dark brows. Then she was not sure that she liked him, she even thought she was sensible of a sort of repulsion. She had a feeling as if he were weighing her in his mind and, not approving of her, treated her at times with indifference, at times with a certain disdain. She was conscious of an antagonism as Wolffert showed scorn of conditions and things which she had been brought up to believe almost as much a necessary part of life as air and light. She promptly began to argue with him, but when she found that he usually had the best of the argument, she became more careful how she opened herself to his attack. He aroused in her the feeling of opposition. His scorn of the money-making spirit of the day led her to defend what she secretly held in contempt. And once when he had been inveighing against commercialism that set up Gods of Brass to worship, and declared that it was the old story of Nebuchadnezzar over again—and was the forerunner to brotherhood with the beasts of the field, she wheeled on him, declaring that it was "only people who had no power to make money who held such views."

"Do you think that I could not make money if I wished to do so?" said Wolffert quietly, with an amused light in his eyes as they rested on her with an expression

which was certainly not hostile; for her eagerness had brought warm blood to her cheeks and her eyes were sparkling with the glow of contention.

"Yes, if you were able you would be as rich as a Jew."

A yet more amused look came into Wolffert's eyes.

"Are all Jews rich?" he asked.

"Yes—all who are capable—you know they are."

"No, for I am a Jew and I am not rich," said Wolffert.

"What! You!—You a— Oh, I beg your pardon! I—"she blushed deeply.

"Pray don't apologize—don't imagine that I am offended. Would you be offended if I charged you with coming from a race of poets and philosophers and scientists—of a race that had given the world its literature and its religion?"

She burst out laughing.

"No; but I was such a fool—pray forgive me." She held out her hand and Wolffert took it and pressed it firmly—and this was the beginning of their friendship.

Wolffert walked home slowly that evening, that is, across the fields to the little farmhouse where John Marvel lived. He had food for thought.

When Eleanor Leigh saw John Marvel a few days later she told him of her conversation and the speech she had made to his friend. "You know," said John, "that he is rich or could be, if he chose to go home. His father is very rich."

"He is a new Jew to me," said Eleanor Leigh; "he is quite different from the typical Jew."

"I wonder if there is a typical Jew," questioned John to himself, and this set Eleanor wondering too.

But Eleanor Leigh found other causes for wonder in Wolffert besides the salient fact of his race which she had mentioned to her cousins, and they forced upon her the consciousness that she would have to readjust her ideas of many things as she had been compelled to do in regard to the appearance and aims of this singular people. Her idea of the Israelites had always been curiously connoted with hooked noses, foreign speech of a far from refined type, and a persistent pursuit of shekels by ways generally devious and largely devoted to shops containing articles more or less discarded by other people. Here she found a cultivated gentleman with features, if not wholly classical, at least more regular and refined than those of most young men of her acquaintance; speech so cultivated as to be quite distinguished, and an air and manner so easy and gracious as to suggest to her complete knowledge of the great world. No matter what subject was discussed between them, he knew about it more than any one else, and always threw light on it which gave it a new interest for her. He had a knowledge of the Literature and Art, not only of the ancients, but of most modern nations, and he talked to her of things of which she had never so much as heard. He had not only travelled extensively in Europe, but had travelled in a way to give him an intimate knowledge not merely of the countries, but of the people and customs of the countries which no one she had ever met possessed. He had crossed in the

steerage of ocean-liners more than once and had stoked across both to England and the Mediterranean.

"But what made you do it?" she asked. "Did not you find it terrible?"

"Yes—pretty bad." Wolffert was at the moment showing her how tea was made in certain provinces along the Caspian Sea which he had visited not long before. "About as bad as it could be."

"Then what made you do it?"

"Well, I saved money by it, too."

What the other reason was she did not press him to give. She only thought, "That is the Jew of it." But after she had seen more of him she discovered that the other reason was that he might learn by personal experience what the condition was in the emigrant ships and the holes where the stokers lived deep down amid the coal-bunkers and the roaring furnaces, and further, that he might know the people themselves. Incidentally, he had learned there and elsewhere Italian and Russian, with the strange Hebraic faculty of absorbing whatever he came in touch with, but he thought no more of knowing that than of knowing Yiddish.

It was this study of conditions that finally gave her the key to his design in life, for it developed as their acquaintance grew that this clear-headed, cultivated, thoughtful man held strange views as to the ordinary things of life, the things which she had always accepted as as fundamental and unchangeable as the solid earth or the vaguely comprehended but wholly accepted revolution of the spheres. In fact, he held that the condi-

tions of modern life, the relations of people in mass, which she had somehow always considered as almost perfect and, indeed, divinely established, were absolutely outworn and fundamentally unrighteous and unjust. She at first did not take him seriously. She could not. To find a pleasant and, indeed, rather eloquent-spoken young man denounce as wicked and vile usurpation the establishment of competitive enterprises, and the accumulation of capital by captains of industry, appeared to her almost impious. Yet, there he sat with burning eyes and thrilling voice denouncing the very things she had always considered most commendable. "Why, that is Socialism, isn't it?" she asked, feeling that if she could convict him of this somewhat vaguely comprehended term she would prove her old foundations unshaken.

Wolffert smiled. He was very good-looking when he smiled. "No, not exactly—if it is, it is only an elementary and individual kind of Socialism; but it is Socialism so far as it is based on a profound desire to reconstruct society and to place it on a natural and equitable social foundation where every one shall have a chance to work and to reap the fruit of such work."

"What is Socialism?" she demanded suddenly.

"It is not what you mean by the term," he laughed. "It is not taking the property of those who have worked for it and giving to those who neither have worked nor will work—that is what you have in mind."

"Precisely," she nodded.

"It is—at least, the Socialism I mean—the application of the same method of general order by the people

at large to labor and the product of labor: property—that is now employed in Government. The reconstruction of the present methods so that all should participate both in the labor, and in the product." He went on to picture glowingly the consequences of this Utopian scheme when all men should work and all should reap. But though he made it appear easy enough to him, Eleanor Leigh's practical little head saw the difficulties and the flaws much more readily than the perfect result which he appeared to find so certain.

"You cannot reconstruct human nature," she protested, "and when you shall have gotten your system thoroughly under way, those who have gotten in positions of power will use their advantage for their own benefit, and then you will still have to begin all over again." But Wolffert was certain of the result and pointed out the work of his friend John Marvel as a proof of his theory.

While, at first, the broad-shouldered young clergyman fled from her presence with a precipitation which was laughable, it was not long before he appeared to have steeled himself sufficiently against her shafts of good-natured persiflage to be able to tolerate her presence, and before a great while had passed, her friends began to tease her on the fact that wherever she went Mr. Marvel was pretty sure to appear. One of her old cousins, half-rallyingly and half-warningly, cautioned her against going too far with the young man, saying, "Mr. Marvel, my dear, is too good a man for you to amuse yourself with, and then fling away. What is sim-

ply the diversion of an hour for you, may become a matter of real gravity with him. He is already deeply interested in you and unless you are interested in him——"

"Why, I am interested in him," declared the girl, laughing. "Why, he tells me of all the old sick women and cats in the parish and I have an engagement to go around with him and see some old women to-morrow. You ought to see some that we went to visit the other day!"

"I know, my dear, but you must not make fun of his work. He is happy in it and is accomplishing a great deal of good, and if you should get him dissatisfied——"

"Oh, no, indeed; I gave him some money last week for a poor family to get some clothes so that they could come to church. They were named Banyan. They live near the mines. The whole family were to be christened next Sunday, and what do you suppose they did? As soon as they got the clothes they went last Sunday to a big baptizing and were all immersed! I was teasing him about that when you heard me laughing at him."

"The wretches!" exclaimed her cousin. "To think of their deceiving him so!"

"I know," said the girl. "But I think he minded the deception much more than the other. Though I charged him with being disappointed at not getting them into his fold, really, I don't think he minded it a bit. At least, he said he would much rather they had gone where they would be happy."

"Now, Mr. Marvel's friend, Mr. Wolffert, is a different matter. He appears quite able to take care of himself."

"Quite," said Miss Leigh dryly.

"But, my dear," said her cousin, lowering her voice, "they say he is a Jew."

"He is," said Eleanor.

"You know it?"

"Yes, he told me so himself."

"Told you himself! Why, I thought—! How did he come to tell you?"

"Why, I don't know. We were talking and I said something foolish about the Jews—about some one being 'as rich and stingy as a Jew,' and he smiled and said, 'Are all Jews rich—and stingy?' And I said, 'If they have a chance,' and he said, 'Not always. I am a Jew and I am not rich.' Well, I thought he was fooling, just teasing me—so I went on, and do you know he is not only a Jew, but Mr. Marvel says he is rich, only he does not claim his money because he is a Socialist. Mr. Marvel says he could go home to-morrow and his father would take him and lavish money on him; but he works—works all the time among the poor."

"Well, I must say I always liked him," said her cousin.

"But he isn't such good fun to tease as Mr. Marvel —he is too intense. Mr. Marvel does get so red and unhappy-looking when he is teased."

"Well, you have no right to tease him. He is a clergyman and should be treated with respect. You wouldn't dare to tease your rector in town—the great Dr. — What is his name?"

"Oh! wouldn't I? Dr. Bartholomew Capon. Why, he is one of the greatest beaux in town. He's always

running around to see some girl—ogling them with his big blue eyes."

"Eleanor!" exclaimed her cousin reprovingly.

"Why, he'd marry any one of the Canter girls who would have him, or Aunt Sophia, or——"

"Eleanor, don't be profane."

The old lady looked so shocked that the girl ran over and kissed her, with a laugh.

"Why, I've told him so."

"Told him? You haven't!"

"Yes, I have. I told him so when he tried to marry me. Then he tried Aunt Sophia."

"What! Eleanor, you are incorrigible. You really are. But do tell me about it. Did he really court you? Why, he's old enough to be your——"

"Grandfather," interrupted the girl. "That's what I told him, substantially."

"Served him right, too. But he must be a fine preacher from what my old friend, Pansy Tipps, once wrote me. Did you ever meet Pansy Tipps? She and her sister live in your city. They went there years ago to press a claim they had to a large fortune left them by their father, Colonel Tipps, who used to be a very rich man, but left his affairs somewhat complicated, I gather from what Pansy writes me, or did write, for she does not write very often now. I wish you'd go and see them when you go back."

"I will," said Eleanor. "Where do they live?"

"At a Mrs. Kale's—she keeps a boarding-house—I don't know the exact location, and mislaid Pansy's

letter a year or more ago, but you will have no difficulty in finding it. It must be in the fashionable quarter and I should think any one could tell you where she lives."

"I will find her," said Eleanor, laughing.

XII

JOHN MARVEL

When, a little later, a scourge of diphtheria broke out in a little mining camp not far from the home of Miss Leigh's relatives and she learned that John Marvel spent all his time nursing the sick and relieving their necessities as far as possible, she awakened to a realization of the truth of what her cousin had said, that under his awkward exterior lay a mine of true gold.

Day by day reports came of the spread of the deadly pestilence, making inroads in every family, baffling the skill and outstripping the utmost efforts of the local physician; day by day, the rumor came that wherever illness appeared there was John Marvel.

One afternoon Miss Leigh, who had ridden over in the direction of the mining village to try and get some information about the young clergyman, who, a rumor said, had been stricken himself the day before, came on him suddenly in a by-path among the hills. At sight of her he stopped and held up his hand in warning, and at the warning she reined in her horse.

"Don't come nearer," he called to her.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "How are you?" For even at that distance—perhaps, some fifty paces—she could see that he looked wretchedly worn and wan.

"Oh, I'm doing very well," he replied. "How are you? You must not come this way! Turn back!"

She began to rein her horse around and then, on a sudden, as his arm fell to his side, and, stepping a little out of the path, he leant against a tree, the whole situation struck her. Wheeling her horse back, she rode straight up to him though he stiffened up and waved her back.

"You are ill," she said.

"Oh, no. I am not ill, I am only a bit tired; that is all. You must not come this way—go back!"

"But why?" she persisted, sitting now close above him.

"Because—because—there is sickness here. A family there is down." He nodded back toward the curve around which he had just come. "The Banyan family are all ill, and I am just going for help."

"I will go—I, at least, can do that. What help? What do you want?"

She had tightened the rein on her horse and turned his head back.

"Everything. The mother and three children are all down; the father died a few days ago. Send the doctor and anything that you can find—food—clothing—medicine—some one to nurse them—if you can find her. It is the only chance."

"I will." She hesitated a moment and looked down at him, as if about to speak, but he waved her off. "Go, you must not stay longer."

He had moved around so that the wind, instead of blowing from him toward her, blew from the other side of her.

A moment later Eleanor Leigh was galloping for life down the steep bridle-path. It was a breakneck gait, and the path was rough enough to be perilous, but she did not heed it. It was the first time in all her life that she had been conscious that she could be of real use. She felt that she was galloping in a new world. From house to house she rode, but though all were sympathetic, there was no one to go. Those who might have gone, were elsewhere—or were dead. The doctor was away from home attending at other bedsides and, by the account given, had been working night and day until he could scarcely stand. Riding to the nearest telegraph station, the girl sent a despatch to a doctor whom she knew in the city where she lived, begging him to come or to send some one on the first train and saying that he would be met and that she would meet all his expenses. Then she sat down and wrote a note to her cousin. And two hours later, just as the dusk was falling, she rode up to the door of a country cabin back among the hills. As she softly pushed open the door, with her arm full of bundles, a form rose from the side of a bed and stood before her in the dusk of the room.

"My God! you must not come in here. Why have you come here?"

"To help you," said the girl.

"But you must not come in. Go out. You must," said John Marvel.

"No, I have come to stay. I could not live if I did not stay now." She pushed her way in. "Here are some things I have brought. I have telegraphed for a doctor."

"But you must not come in."

It was long before she could satisfy John Marvel, but she staid, and all that night she worked with him over the sick and the dying. All that night they two strove to hold Death at bay, across those wretched beds. Once, indeed, he had struck past their guard and snatched a life; but they had driven him back and saved the others. Ere morning came one of the children had passed away; but the mother and the other children survived; and Eleanor Leigh knew that John Marvel, now on his knees, now leaning over the bed administering stimulants, had saved them.

As Eleanor Leigh stepped out into the morning light, she looked on a new earth, as fair as if it had just been created, and it was a new Eleanor Leigh who gazed upon it. The tinsel of frivolity had shrivelled and perished in the fire of that night. Sham had laid bare its shallow face and fled away Life had taken on reality. She had seen a man, and thenceforth only a man could command her.

The physician came duly, sent up by the one she had telegraphed to; rode over to the Banyan house, and later to the village, where he pronounced the disease diphtheria and the cause probably defective drainage and consequent impregnation of the water supply; wrote a prescription; commended the country doctor, returned home, and duly charged nearly half as much as the country doctor got in a year, which Miss Leigh duly paid with thoughts of John Marvel. This was what made the change in the girl which her father had noted.

No novelist can give all of a hero's or a heroine's life. He must take some especial phase and develop his characters along that line, otherwise he would soon overload his boat and swamp his reader's patience. He is happy who having selected his path of action does not wear out the reader in asking him to follow even this one line. Thus, it is possible to give only a part of Miss Eleanor Leigh's relation to life, and naturally the part selected is that which had also its relation to John Marvel.

If it be supposed by any one that Miss Eleanor Leigh devoted her entire time and thought to working among the poor he is greatly mistaken. John Marvel and Leo Wolffert did this: but Miss Leigh was far from living the consecrated life. She only made it a part of her life, that is all, and possibly this was the best for her to do. The glimpse which she got at the death-bed in the Banyan cottage that night when she went to help John Marvel fight death, tore the veil from her eyes and gave her a revelation of a life of which she had never dreamed till then, though it lay all about her in its tragic nakedness—but while it gave her pause and inspired her with a sincere wish to help the poor—or, possibly, to help John Marvel and Leo Wolffert, it did not change her nature or make her a missionary. An impulse, whatever its ultimate action, does not revolutionize. She still retained the love of pleasure natural to all young creatures. The young tree shoots up by nature into the sun. She still took part in the gay life about her, and, if possible, found a greater zest in it for

the consciousness that she had widened her horizon and discovered more interests outside of the glittering little brazen circle in which her orbit had been hitherto confined. She had immediately on returning home interested herself to secure for John Marvel an invitation from Dr. Capon, her rector, to become one of his assistants and take charge of an outlying chapel which he had built in the poorest district of the town, moved thereto by a commendable feeling that the poor should have the gospel preached to them and that his church should not allow all the honors to go to other churches, particularly that of Rome. Dr. Capon prided himself and was highly esteemed by his fellows—that is, the upper officials, clergy, and laity alike—on his ability to obtain from his people the funds needed to extend what was known as "the work of the Parish," by which was signified mainly the construction of buildings, additions thereto, embellishments thereof, and stated services therein, and, incidentally, work among the poor for whom the buildings were supposed to have been planned. The buildings having all been erected and paid for and due report and laudation thereof having been made, it was found rather more difficult to fill them than had been previously anticipated. And it was set down somewhat to the perversity of the poor that they refused the general invitation extended them to come and be labelled and patronized with words and smiles quite as unctuous as benignant.

Dr. Capon had not the reputation of getting on quite comfortably with his assistants. The exactions of his

type of success had made him a business man. As his power of organization increased, spirituality dwindled. He dealt more with the rich and less with the poor. He had the reputation of being somewhat exacting in his demands on them, and of having a somewhat overweening sense of his own importance and authority. Bright young men either declined altogether his suggestions of the whiteness of the harvest in the purlieus of the city, or, having been led into accepting positions under him, soon left him for some country parish or less imposing curacy—an exotic word which the Doctor himself had had something to do with importing from over seas. It thus happened that his chapel recently built for the poor with funds elicited from Dr. Capon's wealthy parishioners was vacant when Miss Eleanor Leigh consulted the Reverend Doctor as to a good church for a peculiarly good young clergyman, and the Doctor being at that time in his second mourning and likewise in that state of receptivity incident to clerical widowers of a year and a half's standing, yielded readily to his fair parishioner's solicitations, and the position was tendered to John Marvel and after some hesitation was accepted—his chief motive being that his old friend Wolffert was there doing a work in which he had greatly interested him. If the fact that Miss Eleanor Leigh also lived in that city influenced him, it would simply prove that John Marvel, like the rest of Humanity was only mortal. The tender was made without the usual preliminary examination of the young man by the Doctor, so impressed had he been by the young girl's

enthusiastic accounts of John Marvel's work and influence among the poor. Thus it was, that when John Marvel finally presented himself, the Doctor was more than surprised at his appearance—he was, indeed, almost shocked.

The Doctor was not only fond of his own appearance —which was certainly that of a gentleman and a very well-fed and clerical looking one as well—but he took especial pride in having his assistants also good-looking and clerical. He loved to march in processional and recessional at the end of a stately procession with two or three fine-looking young priests marching before him. It had a solemnizing effect—it made the church appear something important. It linked him with the historic and Apostolic Church of the ages. With the swelling organ pouring forth its strains to soar and die among the groined arches above him, he sometimes felt as he glanced along the surpliced line before him as if he were borne away, and had any one cried to him from the side he might almost have been able to heal with his blessing. But this short, broad, bow-legged, near-sighted man in his shabby, ill-fitting clothes! Why, it would never do to have him about him! He would mar the whole harmony of the scene. If it had not been too late and if the young man had not had such a potent influence behind him, the Doctor might have suggested some difficulties in the way of carrying through the arrangements he had proposed; but though Mrs. Argand and her brother-in-law were understood to have had some differences over certain business

matters, she was very fond of her niece and she was the wealthiest woman who came to his church. The Doctor reflected, therefore, that he need not have the awkward young man about him much: and when a little later it appeared that this gawky young man was filling his chapel and neighborhood-house, poor-club and night-schools and was sending in reports which showed that real work was being done, the Doctor was well satisfied to let him remain—so well, indeed, that he never invited him to his house socially, but only held official relations with him. The report that among John Marvel's chief assistants in the work of organizing his poor-clubs and night-school was a Jew Socialist disturbed the Doctor slightly, but he reflected that when one showed such notable results it was in a way necessary to employ many curious agencies, and, after all, the association with Jews in secular affairs was a matter of taste.

XIII

MR. LEIGH.

Now, to recur to the period of my arrival in the West—the day after Miss Leigh's return home her father paid her the unusual honor of leaving his office to take lunch with her.

Her mind was full of the subject of the paper she had read in the press that morning, giving a lurid picture of the inconvenience and distress entailed on the passengers and scoring the management of the company for permitting what was claimed to be "so gross a breach of the rights of the public."

Ordinarily, she would have passed it over with indifference—a shrug of her white shoulders and a stamp of her little foot would have been all the tribute she would have paid to it. But of late she had begun to think.

It had never before been brought so clearly to the notice of the girl how her own pleasures—not the natural but the created pleasures—of which she was quite as fond as other healthy girls of her age and class, were almost exclusively at the expense of the class she had been accustomed to regard with a general sort of vague sympathy as "the Poor."

The attack on her father and herself enraged her; but, as she cooled down, a feeling deeper than mere anger at an injustice took possession of her mind.

To find that she herself had, in a way, been the occa-

sion of the distress to women and children, startled her and left in her mind a feeling of uneasiness to which she had hitherto been a stranger.

"Father," she began, "did you see that dreadful article in the *Trumpet* this morning?"

Mr. Leigh, without looking up, adopted the natural line of special pleading, although he knew perfectly well instantly the article to which she referred.

"What article?" he asked.

"That story about our having delayed the passenger train with women and children on it and then having side-tracked them without breakfast, in order to give our car the right-of-way."

"Oh! yes. I believe I saw that. I see so many ridiculous things in the newspapers, I pay no attention to them."

"But, father, that was a terrible arraignment," said the girl.

"Of whom?" asked Mr. Leigh, with a little twinkle in his eye.

"Why, of you; of Aunt Sophia, of——"

"Of me!"

"Yes, and of me—of everybody connected with the road."

"Not of you, my dear," said Mr. Leigh, with the light of affection warming up his rather cold face. "Surely no one, even the anarchistic writers of the anarchistic press, could imagine anything to say against you."

"Yes, of me, too, though not by name, perhaps; but I was there and I was in a way the cause of the trouble,

because the car was sent after me and Aunt Sophia, and I feel terribly guilty about it."

"Guilty of what, my dear?" smiled her father. "Of simply using your own property in a way satisfactory to you?"

"That is just it, father; that is the point which the writer raises. Is it our own property?"

"It certainly is, my love. Property that I have paid for—my associates and I—and which I control, or did control, in conjunction with the other owners, and propose to control to suit myself and them so long as we have the controlling interest, every socialistic writer, speaker and striker to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Well," said the girl, "that sounds all right. It looks as if you ought to be able to do what you like with your own; but, do you know, father, I am not sure that it is our own. That is just the point—he says——"

"Oh! nonsense!" said her father lightly. "Don't let this Jew go and fill your clear little head with such foolishness as that. Enjoy life while you can. Make your mind easy, and get all the use you can out of what I have amassed for you. I only hope you may have as much pleasure in using it as I have had in providing it."

The banker gazed over at his daughter half-quizzically, half-seriously, took out a cigar, and began to clip the end leisurely. The girl laughed. She knew that he had something on his mind.

"Well, what is it?" she asked smiling.

He gave a laugh. "Don't go and imagine that because that Jew can write he is any the less a—don't

go and confound him and his work. It is the easiest thing in the world to pick flaws—to find the defects in any system. The difficult thing is constructive work."

She nodded.

"Did that foreigner go down there while you were there?"

"The Count?"

"The No-Count."

"No, of course not. Where did you get such an idea?"

He lighted his cigar with a look of relief, put it in his mouth, and sat back in his chair.

"Don't let your Aunt Sophia go and make a fool of you. She is a very good business woman, but you know she is not exactly—Solomon, and she is stark mad about titles. When you marry, marry a man."

"Mr. Canter, for example?" laughed the girl. "He is Aunt Sophia's second choice. She is always talking about his money."

"She is always talking about somebody's money, generally her own. But before I'd let that fellow have you I'd kill him with my own hand. He's the worst young man I know. Why, if I could tell you half—yes, one-tenth, of the things I have heard about him—But I can't tell you—only don't go and let anybody pull the wool over your eyes."

"No fear of that," said the girl.

"No, I don't know that there is. I think you've got a pretty clear little head on your shoulders. But when any one gets—gets—why, gets her feelings enlisted you can't just count on her, you know. And with your

Aunt Sophy ding-donging at you and flinging her sleek Count and her gilded fools at you, it takes a good head to resist her."

The girl reassured him with a smile of appreciation,

"I don't know where she got that from," continued her father. "It must have been that outside strain, the Prenders. Your mother did not have a trace of it in her. I never saw two half-sisters so different. She'd have married anybody on earth she cared for—and when she married me I had nothing in the world except what my father chose to give me and no very great expectations. She had a rich fellow from the South tagging after her—a big plantation and lots of slaves and all that, and your Aunt Sophy was all for her marrying him—a good chap, too—a gentleman and all that; but she turned him down and took me. And I made my own way. What I have I made afterward—by hard work till I got a good start, and then it came easy enough. The trouble since has been to keep others from stealing it from me—and that's more trouble than to make it, I can tell you—what between strikers, gamblers, councilmen, and other knaves, I have a hard time to hold on to what I have."

"I know you have to work very hard," said the girl, her eyes on him full of affection. "Why, this is the first time I've had you up to lunch with me in months. I felt as much honored as if it had been the King of England."

"That's it—I have to stay down there to keep the robbers from running off with my pile. That young

fellow thought he'd get a little swipe at it, but I taught him a thing or two. He's a plunger. His only idea is to make good by doubling up—all right if the market's rising and you can double. But it's a dangerous game, especially if one tries to recoup at the faro table."

"Does he play faro?" asked the girl.

"He plays everything, mainly Merry H—l. I beg your pardon—I didn't mean to say that before you, but he does. And if his father didn't come to his rescue and plank up every time he goes broke, he'd have been in the bankrupt court—or jail—and that's where he'll wind up yet if he don't look out."

"I don't believe you like him," laughed the girl.

"Oh! yes, I do. I like him well enough—he is amusing rather, he is gay, careless, impudent—he's the main conduit through which I extract money from old Prender's coffers. He never spends anything unless you pay him two gold dollars down for one paper one on the spot. But I want him to keep away from you, that's all; I suppose I've got to lose you some time, but I'll be hanged if I want to give you up to a blackguard—a gambler—a rou—a lib—a d——d blackguard like that."

"Well, you will never have that to do," said the girl; "I promise you that."

"How is the strike coming on?" asked his daughter. "When I went away it was just threatening, and I read in the papers that the negotiations failed and the men were ordered out; but I haven't seen much about it in the papers since, though I have looked."

"Oh! Yes—it's going on, over on the other lines across town, in a desultory sort of way," said her father wearily—"the fools! They won't listen to any reason."

"Poor people!" sighed the girl. "Why did they go out?"

"Poor fools!" said Mr. Leigh warmly; "they walked out for nothing more than they always have had."

"I saw that they had some cause; what was it?"

"Oh! they've always some cause. If they didn't have one they'd make it. Now they are talking of extending it over our lines."

"Our lines! Why?"

"Heaven knows. We've done everything they demanded—in reason. They talk about a sympathetic strike. I hear that a fellow has come on to bring it about. Poor fools!"

The girl gave him a smile of affection as he pushed back his chair. And leaning over her as he walked toward the door, he gave her a kiss of mingled pride and affection. But when he had left the room she sat still for some moments, looking straight ahead of her, her brow slightly puckered with thought which evidently was not wholly pleasant, and then with a sweeping motion of her hand she pushed her chair back, and, as she arose from the table, said: "I wish I knew what is right!" That moment a new resolution entered her mind, and, ringing the bell for the servant, she ordered her carriage.

XIV

MISS LEIGH SEEKS WORK

She drove first to Dr. Capon's church and, going around, walked in at the side door near the east end, where the robing rooms and the rector's study were. She remembered to have seen on a door somewhere there a sign on which was painted in gilded letters the fact that the rector's office hours were from 12 to 1 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and this was Thursday. The hour, however, was now nearly three, and she had called only on a chance of catching him, a chance which a stout and gloomy looking verger, who appeared from somewhere at her foot-fall, told her at first was lost; but when he recognized her, he changed his air, grew quite interested, and said he would see if the doctor was in. He had been there he knew after lunch, but he might have left. He entered and closed the door softly behind him, leaving the girl in the gloom, but a moment later he returned and showed her in. The rector, with a smile of unfeigned pleasure on his face, was standing just beside a handsome mahogany writing desk, near a window, awaiting her entry, and he greeted her with cordiality.

"Oh! my dear young lady, come in. I was just about going off, and I'm glad I happened to have lingered a little—getting ready to launch a new year-book." He laid his fingers on a batch of printer's proof lying on the

desk beside a stock bulletin. "I was just thinking what a bore it is and lo! it turned into a blessing like Balaam's curse. What can I do for you?" The rector's large blue eyes rested on his comely parishioner with a spark in them that was not from any spiritual fire.

"Well, I don't know," said the girl doubtfully.

"I see you were at the grand ball, or whatever it was last night, and I was so delighted to see that it was for a charitable object—and the particular object which I saw."

"Yes, it is for Mr. Marvel's work out among the poor," said Miss Leigh. The rector's expression changed slightly.

"Oh! yes, that is our work. You know that is our chapel. I built it. The ball must have been a great success. It was the first knowledge I had that you and your dear aunt had returned." His voice had a tone of faint reproach in it.

"Yes, we returned yesterday. I wish the papers would leave me alone," she added.

"Ah! my dear young lady, there are many who would give a great deal to be chronicled by the public prints as you are. The morning and evening star is always mentioned while the little asteroids go unnoticed."

"Well, I don't know about that," said the girl, "but I do wish the papers would let me alone—and my father too."

"Oh! yes, to be sure. I did not know what you were referring to. That was an outrageous attack. So utterly unfounded, too, absolutely untrue. Such scurrilous attacks deserve the reprobation of all thinking men."

"The trouble is that the attack was untrue; but the story was not unfounded."

"What! What do you mean?" The clergyman's face wore a puzzled expression.

"That our car was hitched on to the train——"

"And why shouldn't it be, my dear young lady? Doesn't the road belong to your father; at least, to your family—and those whom they represent?"

"I don't know that it does, and that is one reason why I have come to see you."

"Of course, it does. You will have to go to a lawyer to ascertain the exact status of the title; but I have always understood it does. Why, your aunt, Mrs. Argand, owns thousands of shares, doesn't she, and your father?" A grave suspicion suddenly flitted across his mind relative to a rumor he had heard of heavy losses by Mr. Leigh and large gains by Mr. Canter, the president of the road, and his associates who, according to this rumor, were hostile to Mr. Leigh.

"I don't know, but even if they do, I am not sure that that makes them owners. Did you read that article?"

"No—well, not all of it—I glanced over a part of it, enough to see that it was very scurrilous, that's all. The head-lines were simply atrocious. The article itself was not so wickedly——'

"I should like to do some work among the poor," said the girl irrelevantly.

"Why, certainly—just what we need—the earnest interest and assistance of just such persons as yourself, of your class; the good, earnest, representatives of the

upper class. If we had all like you there would be no cry from Macedonia."

"Well, how can I go about it?" demanded the girl rather cutting in on the rector's voluble reply.

"Why, you can teach in the Sunday-school—we have a class of nice girls, ladies, you know, a very small one—and I could make my superintendent arrange for Miss —for the lady who now has them to take another class —one of the orphan classes."

"No, I don't mean that kind of thing. If I taught at all I should like to try my hand at the orphan class myself."

"Well, that could be easily arranged—" began the rector; but his visitor kept on without heeding him.

"Only I should want to give them all different hats and dresses. I can't bear to see all those poor little things dressed exactly in the same way—sad, drab or gray frocks, all cut by the same pattern—and the same hats, year in and year out."

"Why, they have new hats every year," expostulated the rector.

"I mean the same kind of hat. Tall and short; stout and thin; slim or pudgy; they all wear the same horrible, round hats—I can't bear to look at them. I vow I'd give them all a different hat for Christmas."

"Oh! my dear, you can't do that—you would spoil them—and it's against the regulations. You must remember that these children are orphans!"

"Being orphans is bad enough," declared the girl, "but those hats are worse. Well, I can't teach them, but I might try some other poor class?"

"Why, let me see. The fact is that we haven't any"—he was speaking slowly, casting his mind over his field—"very poor people in this church. There used to be a number; but they don't come any more. They must have moved out of the neighborhood. I must make my assistant look them up."

"You have no poor, then?"

"Not in this congregation. The fact is this church is not very well suited to them. They don't mix with our people. You see our class of people—of course, we are doing a great work among the poor, our chapels—we have three, one of them, indeed, is a church and larger than many independent churches. Another has given me some anxiety, but the third is doing quite a remarkable work among the working people out in the east end—that under my assistant, the young man you interested yourself so much in last year—and which your ball committee was good enough to consider in selecting the object of its benevolence."

"Yes, I know—Mr. Marvel. I will go out there."

"Oh! my dear, you couldn't go out there!"

"Why not? I want to see him."

"Why, it is away out on the edge of the city—what you might call the jumping-off place—among manufactories and railroad shops."

"Yes, I know. I have been out there."

"You have—why, it is away out. It is on—I don't recall the name of the street. It's away out. I know it's near the street-car terminus that your family own. It's a very pretty chapel indeed. Don't you think so?

It is natural that you should take an interest in it, as your aunt, Mrs. Argand, helped us to build it. She gave the largest contribution toward it. I don't know what we should do without charitable women like her."

"Yes, I know. And Mr. Marvel is coming on well?"

A change came over the face of the rector. "Oh, very well—rather an ungainly fellow and very slow, but doing a very good work for our parish. I have been wanting to get the Bishop to go there all this year as there are a number of candidates for me to present; but he has been so busy and I have been so busy——"

"I will go there," said Miss Leigh, rising.

"I don't think you will like it," urged the rector. "It is a very bad part of the town—almost dangerous, indeed—filled with working people and others of that sort, and I don't suppose a carriage ever——"

"I will go in the street cars," said the girl.

"The street cars! Yes, you could go that way, but why not come here and let me assign you a class?"

"I wish to work among the poor."

"The happy poor!" said the rector, smiling. "Why not come and help me in my work—who need you so much?" His voice had changed suddenly and he attempted to possess himself of the gloved hand that rested on his table, but it was suddenly withdrawn.

"I thought we had settled that finally last year," said Miss Leigh firmly.

"Ah, yes; but the heart is not so easily regulated."

"Oh! yes, yours is. Why don't you try Aunt Sophia again?"

"Try—again?—who?" The rector was manifestly somewhat embarrassed.

"Why, Aunt Sophia—'the evening star,'" said Miss Leigh, laughing.

"Who says—? Did she say I had—ah—addressed her?"

"No—I got it from you. Come on now——"

"Which way are you going? That is just my way. May I have the pleasure of driving up with you? I must go and see your aunt and welcome her back. One moment." He had shown the young lady out of the door. He now turned back and folding up the stock bulletin placed it carefully in his pocket.

As the carriage with its smart team turned into one of the broader streets, two young men were standing in a window of a large building highly decorated, looking idly out on the street. They had just been talking of the threatened strike which the newspapers were discussing, as to which they held similar views.

"I tell you what is the matter with those scoundrels," said the elder of the two, a large, pampered young fellow; "they need cold steel—they ought to be made to work."

"How would that suit us?" laughed the other.

"We don't have to."

"Hello! What's old Bart after?" observed the first one.

"Shekels," said the other, and yawned.

"After her—he's taking notice."

"Oh! no; he's wedded to the tape—goes into the Grand five times a day and reads the tape."

"Bet you, he courts her."

"How 'll you prove it?"

"Ask her."

"Bet you you daren't ask her."

"How much?"

"What you like."

"I don't want to win your money."

"Don't you? Then hand me back that little fifteen hundred you picked up from me last week."

"That was square, but this is a certainty."

"I'd chance it—bet you a thousand, Jim, you daren't ask her to her face if old Bart isn't courting her and hasn't asked her to marry him."

"Oh! that's different. You want to make me put up and then make my bet for me. I tell you what I'll bet—that she's the only girl I know I wouldn't ask that."

"That may be. Now, I tell you what I'll bet—that you want a drink—ring the bell."

"That's a certainty, too," laughed his friend, and they turned and sank wearily in deep chairs till a drink should give them energy to start a fresh discussion.

Having put down the Rev. Bartholomew at the door of her aunt's imposing mansion, Eleanor Leigh, after a moment of indecision, directed her coachman to drive to a certain street in the section known as "downtown," and there she stopped at a pleasant looking old house, and jumping out of the carriage, ran up the worn stone steps and rang the bell. It was a street that had once been fashionable, as the ample, well-built houses and the good doors and windows testified. But that fickle

jade, Fashion, had long since taken her flight to other and more pretentious sections and shops, loan-offices, and small grocers' markets had long engulfed the mansions of the last generation. Had any gauge of the decadence of the quarter been needed it might have been found in the scornful air of Miss Leigh's stout coachman as he sat on his box. He looked unutterably disgusted, and his chin was almost as high as the chins of his tightly reined-up horses.

Miss Leigh asked of the rather slatternly girl who came to the door, if the Miss Tippses were in, and if so, would they see her. When the maid went to see if they were at home, Miss Leigh was shown into a large and very dark room with chairs of many patterns, all old, placed about in it, a horsehair sofa on one side, a marble-topped table in the centre; an upright piano on the other side, and on a small table a large piece of white coral under a glass cover. Where the fireplace had once been, a large register now stood grating off the heat that might try in vain to escape through it.

Presently the maid returned. "Miss Pansy" was in, and would the lady please walk up. It was in the third story, back, at the top of the stairs. Miss Leigh ran up and tapped on the door, waited and tapped again. Then, as there was no answer, she opened the door cautiously and peeped in. It was a small hall-room, bare of furniture except two chairs, a sewing-machine, a table on which was an ironing-board at which at the moment stood a little old lady with a forehead so high

as to be almost bald. She was clad in a rusty black skirt, a loose morning sacque of blue cotton, and she wore loose bedroom-slippers. Her sleeves were rolled up, and her arms were thin and skinny. She held a flat-iron in her hand, with which she had evidently been ironing a white under-garment which lay on the board, and another one was on a little gas-stove which stood near a stationary wash-stand. As Miss Leigh opened the door, the old lady gave a little exclamation of dismay and her hand went involuntarily to her throat.

"Oh! I beg your pardon!" said the girl, starting to retire and close the door; "I thought the servant told me——"

By this time the other had recovered herself.

"Oh! come in, won't you?" she said, with a smile and in a voice singularly soft and refined. "My sister will be ready to receive you in a moment. I was only a little startled. The fact is," she said laughing, "I thought the door was bolted; but sometimes the bolt does not go quite in. My sister— Won't you take a chair? Let me remove those things." She took up the pile of under-garments that was on one chair and placed it on top of a pile of dishes and other things on the other.

"Oh! I am so sorry," protested the girl, who observed that she was concealing the dishes; "I was sure the girl told me it was the door at the head of the stairs."

"She is the stupidest creature—that girl. I must really get my sister to speak to Mrs. Kale about her. I would, except that I am afraid the poor thing might

lose her place. There is another door just off the little passage that she probably meant."

"Yes—probably. It was I that was stupid."

"Oh! no, not at all. You must excuse the disorder you find. The fact is, this is our work-room, and we were just—I was just doing a little ironing to get these things finished. When your card was brought up—well, we both were—and as my sister is so much quicker, she ran to get ready and I thought I would just finish this when I was at it, and you would excuse me."

"Oh! I am so sorry. I wouldn't for anything have interrupted you," repeated the girl, observing how all the time she was trying unobtrusively to arrange her poor attire, rolling down her sleeves and smoothing her darned skirt, all the while with a furtive glance of her eye toward the door.

"Oh! my dear, I wouldn't have had you turned away for anything in the world. My sister would be *désolée.* We have a better room than this, where we usually receive our visitors. You will see what a nice room it is. We can't very well afford to have two rooms; but this is too small for us to live in comfortably and we have to keep it because it has a stationary wash-stand with hot water, which enables us to do our laundering."

"Yes, I see," murmured Miss Leigh softly.

"You see, we earn our living by making underclothes for—for a firm——"

"I see, and what nice work you do." She was handling a garment softly.

"Yes, my sister does beautiful work; and I used to

do pretty well, too; but I am troubled a little with my eyes lately. The light isn't very good at night—and the gas is so expensive. I don't see quite as well as I used to do."

"How much can you do?" asked her visitor, who had been making a mental calculation.

"Why, I— It is hard to tell. I do the coarser work and my sister does the finishing; then she usually launders and I iron when I am able. I suffer with rheumatism so that I can't help her very much."

"I hope you make them pay you well for it," blurted out the girl.

"Why, we used to get a very good price. We got till recently seven cents apiece, but now it has been cut down—that was for everything, laundering and ironing, too. We are glad to get that."

"How on earth do you manage to live on it?"

"Oh! we live very well—very well, indeed," said the little lady cheerfully. "Mrs. Kale is very good to us. She lets us have the rooms cheaper than she would any one else. You see she used to know us when we lived back in the East. Her father was a clerk in our father's office, and her mother went to school with us. Then when we lost everything and were turned out, we found we had to make our own living and we came here to see about our case, and she found we were here—and that's the way we came to be here. But don't you let my sister know I told you about the sewing," she said, dropping her voice, as a brisk step was heard outside the door. "Ah! here she is now!" as at the moment the door

opened and a brisk little old lady, almost the counterpart of her sister, except that she might have been ten years her junior, that is, sixty instead of seventy years of age, tripped into the room.

"Oh! my dear Miss Leigh, how good of you to come all the way out here to call on us! Sister, what in the world are you doing? Why will you do this? I can't keep her from amusing herself! (This with a shake of the head and a comical appeal for sympathy from her visitor.) Won't you walk into our sitting-room? Now, sister, do go and make yourself presentable. You know she will slave over all sorts of queer things. She really loves sewing and ironing. I'm quite ashamed to have you come into this pig-sty. Walk in, won't you?" And she led the way into a larger room adjoining the work-room, leaving Miss Leigh in doubt which was the more pathetic, the little old lady still delving over the ironing-board, making no pretence to conceal their poverty, or the other in her poor "best," trying to conceal the straits in which they were fallen.

Eleanor had observed that the older sister's gaze had constantly rested on the rose she wore, and as they were going out, the latter called her sister's attention to it. She said, she thought it possibly the most beautiful rose she had ever seen.

"Won't you have it?" said Eleanor, and unpinned it.

"Oh! no, indeed, I wouldn't deprive you of it for anything. It is just where it ought to be."

Eleanor persisted, and finally overcame both her reluctance and her sister's objection.

She was struck with the caressing way in which she took and held it, pressing it against her withered cheek.

"Sister, don't you remember the Giant-of-Battles we used to have in our garden at Rosebank? This reminds me of it so—its fragrance is just the same."

"Yes. We used to have a great many roses," explained the younger sister, as she led the way into the next room as if she were asking Eleanor into a palace, though this room was almost as bare of furniture as the other, the chief difference being an upright case which was manifestly a folding-bed, and a table on which were a score of books, and a few old daguerreotypes.

"Your friend, Mr. Marvel, was here the other day. What a nice young man he is."

"Yes," said Eleanor. "I am going out to see him. Where has he moved to?" Miss Pansy said she did not know the street; but her sister had the address. She would go and see. When she came back, she went over and opened the old Bible lying on the table. "Here is where we keep the addresses of those we especially value," she said, smiling. "Oh! here it is. When he was here the other day, he brought us a treat; a whole half-dozen oranges; won't you let me prepare you one? They are so delicious."

Eleanor, who had been holding a bank-note clutched in her hand, thanked her with a smile, but said she must go. She walked across the room, and took up the Bible casually, and when she laid it down it gaped a little in a new place.

"Oh, you know we have had quite an adventure," said Miss Pansy.

"An adventure? Tell me about it."

"Why, you must know there is a young man here I am sure must be some one in disguise. He is so—well, not exactly handsome, but really distinguished looking, and he knows all about railroads and things like that."

"You'd better look out for him," said Miss Leigh.

"Oh, do you think so? My sister and I were thinking of consulting him about our affairs—our railroad case, you know."

"Oh! Well, what do you know about him?"

"Nothing yet. You see, he has just come; but he joined us on the street this morning when we were going out—just shopping—and offered to take our bundles—just two little bundles we had in our hands, and was so polite. My dear, he has quite the grand air!"

"Oh, I see. Well, that does not necessarily make him a safe adviser. Why not let me ask my father about your matter? He is a railroad man, and could tell you in a minute all about it."

"Oh, could you? That would be so kind in you."

"But you must tell me the name of the road in which you had the stock."

"Oh, my dear. I don't know that I can do that. I only know that it was the Transcontinental and something and something else. I know that much, because it was only about sixty miles long, and we used to say that the name was longer than the road. My father

used to say that it would some day be a link in a transcontinental chain—that's where it got its name, you know."

"Well, look out for your prince in disguise," said the girl, smiling as she rose to take her leave.

That evening at dinner, after Eleanor had given her father an account of her day, with which she always beguiled him, including a description of her visit to the two old ladies, she suddenly asked, "Father, what railroad was it that used to be known as the 'Transcontinental Something and Something?'"

"The what?"

"The 'Transcontinental Something and Something Else?' It was about sixty miles long, and was bought up by some bigger road and reorganized."

"I suppose you mean the 'Transcontinental, Northwestern and Great Iron Range Road.' That about meets the condition you mention. What do you know about it?"

"Was it reorganized?"

"Yes; about twenty years ago, and again about ten years ago. I never quite understood the last reorganization. Mr. Argand had it done—and bought up most of the stock."

"Was any one squeezed out?"

"Sure—always are in such cases. That is the object of a reorganization—partly. Why are you so interested in it?" Mr. Leigh's countenance wore an amused look.

"I have two friends—old ladies—who lost everything they had in it."

"I guess it wasn't much. What is their name?"

"It was all they had. They are named Tipps."

Mr. Leigh's expression changed from amusement to seriousness. "Tipps—Tipps?" he repeated reminiscently. "Bassett Tipps? I wonder if they were connected with Bassett Tipps?'

"They were his daughters—that was their father's name. I remember now, Miss Pansy told me once."

"You don't say so! Why, I used to know Colonel Tipps when he was the big man of this region. He commanded this department before I came out here to live, and the old settlers thought he was as great a man as General Washington. He gave old Argand his start. He built that road,—was, in fact, a man of remarkable foresight, and if he had not been killed—Argand was his agent and general factotum— They didn't come into the reorganization, I guess?"

"That's it—they did not—and now they want to get their interest back."

"Well, tell them to save their money," said Mr. Leigh. "It's gone—they can't get it back."

"They want you to get it back for them."

"Me!" exclaimed Mr. Leigh. "They want me to get it back! Oh, ho-ho! They'd better go after your Aunt Sophia and Canter."

"Yes; I told them you would."

"You did?" Mr. Leigh's eyes once more lit up with amusement.

"Yes: you see they were robbed of every cent they had in the world, and they have not a cent left."

"Oh! no, they were not robbed. Everything was properly done and absolutely regular, as I remember. It must have been. I think there was some sort of claim presented afterward by the Tipps Estate which was turned down. Let me see; McSheen had the claim, and he gave it up—that was when? Let me see. He became counsel for your Uncle Argand in—what year was it?—you were a baby—it must have been eighteen years ago."

"That was nineteen years ago, sir. I am now twenty," said his daughter, sitting up with a very grand air.

The father's eyes lit up with pride and affection as he gazed at the trim, straight figure and the glowing face.

"You were just a little baby—so big." He measured a space of about two span with his hands. "That was your size then, for I know I thought your Uncle Argand might have made me counsel instead of McSheen. But he didn't. And that was McSheen's start."

"He sold out," said the girl with decision.

"Oh, no—I don't think he would do that. He is a lawyer."

"Yes, he would. He's a horrid, old, disreputable rascal. I've always thought it, and now I know it. And I want you to get my old ladies' interest back for them."

"I can't do that. No one can. It's too long ago. If they ever had a claim it's all barred, long ago."

"It oughtn't to be—if it was stolen," persisted his daughter, "and it was."

XV

THE LADY OF THE VIOLETS

Having decided that Mrs. Kale's did not present the best advantages, I determined to move to more suitable quarters. I chose a boarding-house, partly by accident and partly because it was in a semi-fashionable quarter which I liked, and I paid Mrs. Starling, the landlady, a decisive person, two weeks' board in advance, so as to have that long a lease at any rate, and a point from which to take my bearings. I had learned of the place through Kalender, who was deeply enamored of Miss Starling, a Byzantine-hued young lady, and who regarded the house somewhat as Adam is assumed to have regarded Eden after his banishment. Mrs. Starling was, in this case, the angel of the flaming sword. She had higher ambitions for Miss Starling.

I had less than forty dollars left, and fifteen of that was borrowed next day by a fellow-boarder named Pushkin, who occupied the big front room adjoining my little back hall-room, and who had "forgotten to draw any money out of bank," he said, but would "return it the next day at dinner time," a matter he also forgot. I was particularly struck with him not because he had a title and was much kotowed to by our landlady and her boarders—especially the ladies, as

because I recalled his name in juxtaposition with Miss Leigh's in the flamboyant account of the ball the night after I arrived.

I was now ensconced in a little pigeon-hole of an office in a big building near the court-house, where, with a table, two chairs, and a dozen books, I had opened what I called my "law office," without a client or an acquaintance; but with abundant hopes.

I found the old principle on which I had been reared set at naught, and that life in its entirety was a vast struggle based on selfishness.

I was happy enough at first, and it was well I was. It was a long time before I was happy again. Having in mind Miss Leigh, I wrote and secured a few letters of introduction; but they were from people who did not care anything for me to people who did not care anything about them—semi-fashionable folk, mainly known in social circles, and I had no money to throw away on society. One, indeed, a friend of mine had gotten for me from Mr. Poole to a man of high standing both in business and social circles, the president of a manufacturing company, with which, as I learned later, Mr. Poole had formerly some connection. This gentleman's name was Leigh, and I wondered if he were the same person who had been posted by Kalender at the head of my story of the delayed train. I thought of presenting the letter. It, however, was so guarded that I thought it would not do me the least good, and, besides, I did not wish to owe anything to Lilian Poole's father, for I felt sure his influence had always been against me,

and I was still too sore to be willing to accept a favor at his hands.

It was well I did not present it, for Mr. Poole with well-considered and characteristic prudence, had written a private letter restricting the former letter to mere social purposes, and had intimated that I had been a failure in my profession and was inclined to speculate. This character he had obtained, as I subsequently learned, from Peck.

The new conditions with which I was confronted had a singular effect on me. I was accustomed to a life where every one knew me and I knew, if not every one, at least something good or bad about every one.

Here I might have committed anything short of murder or suicide without comment, and might have committed both without any one outside of the reporters and the police and Dix caring a straw about it.

I felt peculiarly lonely because I was inclined to be social and preferred to associate with the first man I met on the street to being alone. In fact, I have always accounted it one of my chief blessings that I could find pleasure and entertainment for a half-hour in the company of any man in the world except a fool or a man of fashion, as the old writers used to speak of them, or as we call them now, members of the smart set.

The first things that struck me as I stepped out into the thronged streets of the city were the throngs that hurried, hurried, hurried along, like a torrent pouring through a defile, never stopping nor pausing—only flowing on, intent on but one thing—getting along.

Their faces, undistinguished and indistinguishable in the crowd, were not eager, but anxious. There was no rest, and no room for rest, more than in the rapids of Niagara. It was the bourgeoisie at flood, strong, turgid, and in mass, ponderant; but inextinguishably common. As I stood among them, yet not of them, I could not but remark how like they were in mass and how not merely all distinction but all individuality perished in the mixing. I recalled a speech that my father had once made. "I prefer countrymen," he said, "to city men. The latter are as like as their coats. The ready-made-clothing house is a great civilizer, but also a great leveler. Like the common school of which you boast, it may uplift the mass, but it levels—it destroys all distinction."

This came home to me now.

I had a proof of its truth, and, I may add, of the effect of urban influences not long after I launched on the restless sea of city life. I was passing one day along a street filled with houses, some much finer than others, when my way was blocked by a child's funeral in front of a small but neat house beside one much more pretentious. The white hearse stood at the door and the little white coffin with a few flowers on it was just about to be borne out as I came up. A child's funeral has always appealed to me peculiarly. It seems so sad to have died on the threshold before even opening the door. It appeared to me suddenly to have brought me near to my kind. And I stopped in front of the adjoining house to wait till the sorrowing little

cortege had entered the carriage which followed behind the hearse. A number of other persons had done the same thing. At this moment, the door of the larger house next door opened, and a woman, youngish and well-dressed, appeared and stood on her steps waiting for her carriage which stood at some little distance.

As I was standing near her, I turned and asked her in an undertone:

"Can you tell me whose funeral this is?"

"No, I cannot," she said, so sharply that I took a good look at her as she stood trying to button a tight glove.

"Oh! I thought, perhaps, you knew as they are your next-door neighbors."

"Well, I do not. It's no concern of mine," she said shortly. She beckoned to her carriage across the way. The coachman who had been looking at the funeral caught sight of her and with a start wheeled his horses around to draw up. The number of persons, however, who had stopped like myself prevented his coming up to her door, which appeared to annoy the lady.

"Can't you move these people on?" she demanded angrily of a stout officer who stood like the rest of us, looking on.

"It's a funeral," he said briefly.

"Well, I know it is. I don't expect you to interfere with that. It's these idlers and curiosity mongers who block the way that I want moved to clear a way for my carriage. And if you can't do it, I'll ask Mr. McSheen to put a man on this beat who can. As it happens I am going there now." Insolence could go no farther.

"Let that carriage come up here, will you?" said the officer without changing his expression. "Drive up, lad," he beckoned to the coachman who came as near as he could.

"To Mrs. McSheen's," said the lady in a voice evidently intended for the officer to hear, "and next time, don't stand across the street staring at what you have no business with, but keep your eyes open so that you won't keep me waiting half an hour beckoning to you." She entered the carriage and drove off, making a new attack on her glove to close it over a pudgy wrist. I glanced at the coachman as she closed the door and I saw an angry gleam flash in his eye. And when I turned to the officer he was following the carriage with a look of hate. I suddenly felt drawn to them both, and the old fight between the People and the Bourgeoisie suddenly took shape before me, and I found where my sympathies lay. At this moment the officer turned and I caught his eye and held it. It was hard and angry at first, but as he gave me a keen second glance, he saw something in my face and his eye softened.

"Who is Mr. McSheen?" I asked.

"The next mayor," he said briefly.

"Oh!" I took out my card under an impulse and scribbled my office address on it and handed it to him. "If you have any trouble about this let me know."

He took it and turning it slowly gazed at it, at first with a puzzled look. Then as he saw the address his expression changed.

He opened his coat and put it carefully in his pocket.

"Thank you, sir," he said finally.

I turned away with the consciousness that I had had a new light thrown on life, and had found it more selfish than I had dreamed. I had begun with high hopes. It was, indeed, ever my nature to be hopeful, being healthy and strong and in the prime of vigorous youth. I was always rich when at my poorest, only my heavy freighted ship had not come in. I knew that though the larder was lean and storms were beating furiously off the coast, somewhere, beating her way against the contrary winds, the argosy was slowly making headway, and some day I should find her moored beside my pier and see her stores unladen at my feet. The stress and storm of the struggle were not unwelcome to me. I was always a good fighter when aroused; but I was lazy and too indolent to get aroused. Now, however, I was wide awake. The greatness of the city stirred my pulses. Its blackness and its force aroused my sleeping powers, and as I stepped into the surf and felt the rush of the tides as they swept about and by me, I felt as a fair swimmer might who steps for the first time in a fierce current and feels it clutch his limbs and draw him in. I was not afraid, only awakened and alive to the struggle before me, and my senses thrilled as I plunged and rose to catch my breath and face the vast unknown. Later on I found that the chief danger I had not counted on: the benumbing of the senses, the slow process under which spirit, energy, courage, and even hope finally die.

One who has never had the experience of starting in a big city alone, without a connection of any kind, cannot conceive what it means: the loneliness—utter as in a desert—the waiting—the terrible waiting—being obliged to sit day after day and just wait for business to come, watching your small funds ooze out drop by drop, seeing men pass your door and enter others' offices and never one turn in at yours, till your spirit sinks lower and lower and your heart dies within you. One who has not felt it does not know what it is to be out of work and not able to get it. The rich and fat and sleek —the safe and secure—what know they of want! Want, not of money, but of work: the only capital of the honest and industrious poor! It is the spectre that ever haunts the poor. It makes the world look as though the whole system of society were out of joint—as if all men were in conspiracy against you—as if God had forgotten you. I found men in a harder case than mine—men in multitude, with wives and children, the babe perishing at the mother's withered breast, the children dying for food, staggering along the streets seeking work in vain, while wealth in a glittering flood poured through the streets in which they perished. This bitter knowledge I came to learn day after day till I grew almost to hate mankind. The next step is war against society. Not all who wage it hate the men they fight. It is the cause they hate. There I sat day after day, full of hope and eagerness and—now that my conceit was somewhat knocked out of me—with not only abundant ability, but the stern resolve to

transact any business which might be entrusted to me, and just rotted to despair. No wonder men go to the devil, and enlist to fight the whole establishment of organized society. I almost went. When I look back at it now it seems like a miracle that I did not go wholly. Pride saved me. It survived long after hope died. Sometimes, I even thought of the pistol I had in my trunk. But I had made up my mind to live and win. There, too, came in Pride. I could not bear to think of Lilian Poole and Peck. How she would congratulate herself and how Peck would gloat! No, I could not give him that satisfaction. Peck did me a good turn there. A strong enmity, well based, is not always without good results; but Peck should not smear my memory with pretended pity. So I starved, but held on. When I got so that I could endure it no longer, I used to go out and walk up and down the streets—sometimes the fashionable streets—and look at the handsome residences and the fine carriages and automobiles flashing by and the handsomely dressed people passing, and recall that I was as good as they—in my heart, I thought, better. Some of them with kind faces I used to fancy my friends; but that they did not know I was in town. This conceit helped me. And at times I used to fancy that I lived in a particular house, and owned a particular team: thus living for a brief moment like a child in "making pictures." A house is sometimes personal and well-nigh human to me. It appears to have qualities almost human and to express them on its face: kindness, hostility, arrogance, breadth

or narrowness, and brutal selfishness are often graven on its front I have often felt that I could tell from the outside of a house the characteristics of the people within. Arrogance, ignorance, want of tact, pretentiousness and display, spoke from every massy doorway and gaudy decoration with a loudness which would have shocked a savage. This being so, what characters some of the wealthy people of our cities must have! It must be one of the compensations of the poor that the houses of the rich are often so hideous and unhomelike.

The mansion I selected finally as mine was a light stone mansion, simple in its style, but charming in its proportions; not one of the largest, but certainly one of the prettiest in the whole city. Amid a waste of splendid vulgarity it was almost perfect in its harmonious architectural design and lines, and had a sunny, homelike look. It stood in an ample lot with sun and air all around it, and grass and flowers about it. Our fathers used to say, "seated," which has a more established and restful sound. It looked a home of refinement and ease. Its stable was set back some distance behind and a little to one side, so that I could see that it was of the same stone with the mansion and just enough of the same general style to indicate that it belonged to the mansion, and the teams that came out of it were the nattiest and daintiest in the city.

One day as I was walking, trying to divert myself from my loneliness, a brougham rolled out of this stable

with a pair of airy, prancing bays, shining like satin, and drew up to the carriage-block a little before me, and a young lady came out of the house as I passed by. My heart gave a leap, for it was the girl I had seen on the train. I took her in, rather than scanned her as she tripped down the stone steps, and she glanced at me for a second as if she thought I might be an acquaintance. She made as she stood there one of the loveliest pictures I had ever laid eyes on: her trim, slim figure, exquisitely dressed, in the quietest way; soft, living brown hair, brushed back from a white, broad forehead; beautiful, speaking eyes under nearly straight brows; and a mouth neither too big for beauty nor too small for character; all set off by a big black hat with rich plumes that made a background for what I thought the loveliest face I had ever seen.

Something pleasant had evidently just happened wthin; for she came out of the door smiling, and I observed at the same moment her eyes and her dimples. I wondered that people did not always smile: that smile suddenly lit up everything for me. I forgot my loneliness, my want of success, myself. Her hands were full of parcels as she came down the steps, and just as I passed the wind lifted the paper from one—a bunch of flowers, and in trying to recover it she dropped another and it rolled down to my feet. I picked it up and handed it to her. It was a ball, one of those big, squashy, rubber balls with painted rings around it, that are given to small children because they cannot do anything with them. She thanked me

sweetly and was turnng to her carriage, when under a sudden impulse, I stepped to the door, just as I should have done at home, and, lifting my hat, said, "I beg your pardon, but mayn't I open your door for you?"

She bowed, looking, perhaps, just the least shade surprised. But, having handed her in, I was afraid of embarrassing her, and was backing away and passing on when she thanked me again very graciously. Again I lifted my hat and again got a look into her deep eyes. As the carriage rolled off, she was leaning back in it, and I felt her eyes upon me from under the shade of that big hat with a pleasant look, but I had assumed an unconscious air, and even stopped and picked up, as though carelessly, a couple of violets she had dropped as she crossed the sidewalk; and after a sniff of their fragrance, dropped them into my pocket-book, because they reminded me of the past and because I hated to see them lie on the hard pavement to be crushed by passing feet. The book was empty enough otherwise, but somehow I did not mind it so much after the violets were there.

"Who lives in that house?" I asked of an officer.

"Mr. Leigh, the banker and big west-side street-car man—runs all the lines out that way—all the Argand estate don't run," he added. He waved his arm to include a circle that might take in half the town or half the world. "The big house in the middle of the block is Mrs. Argand's—the great Philanthropist, you know? Everybody knows her." I did not, but I did not care;

I knew all I wanted to know—I knew who Miss Leigh was. I reflected with some concern that this was the name of the vice-president of the Railway whom I had attacked through Kalender and of the man to whom Mr. Poole's perfunctory letter was addressed. I went back to my office in better spirits, and, having no brief to work on, even wrote a poem about the violets—about her leaving a track of violets behind her.

I was drawn to that street a number of times afterward, but I saw her no more.

I don't believe that love often comes at first sight; but that it may come thus, or at least, at second sight, I have my own case to prove. It may be that my empty heart, bruised and lonely in that great city, was waiting with open door for any guest bold enough to walk in and claim possession. It may be that that young lady with her pleasant smile, her high-bred face and kindly air, crossing my path in that stranger-thronged wilderness, was led by Providence; it may be that her grace and charm were those I had pictured long in the Heavenward dreams of youth and but now found. However it was, I went home in love with an ideal whose outward semblance was the girl with the children's toys—truly in love with her. And the vision of Lilian Poole never came to me again in any guise that could discomfort me. From this time the vision that haunted me and led me on was of a sweet-eyed girl who dimpled as she smiled and dropped her violets. The picture of Lilian Poole, standing by the marble mantel in her plush-upholstered parlor, adjusting her

bracelet so as to set off her not too small wrist, while I faced my fate, flitted before my mind, but she was a ghost to me, and my heart warmed as I thought of the lady of the violets and the children's toys.

XVI

THE SHADOW OF SHAM

I soon changed back to my first boarding-house. After my two weeks were out for which I had prepaid, I went to my landlady, Mrs. Starling, a tall, thin woman with high cheek bones, a cold eye and a close mouth, and told her frankly I could not pay any more in advance, and that, though I would certainly pay her within a short time, it might not be convenient for me to pay her by the week, and I left it with her whether she would keep me on these terms. She did not hesitate a second. Her first duty was to herself and family, she said, by which she meant her daughter, "Miss Starling," as she always spoke of her, but whom the irreverent portion of the boarders whom I associated with always spoke of as "Birdy," a young woman who dressed much in yellow, perhaps because it matched her blondined hair, played vehemently on the piano, and entertained the young men who boarded there. "Besides," she "wanted the room for a dressing-room for a gentleman who wished a whole suite," she added, with what I thought a little undue stress on the word "gentleman," as the "gentleman" in question was the person who had borrowed my money from me and never returned it: Count Pushkin, who occupied the big room next my little one. He had, as I learned, cut quite a dash

in town for a while, living at one of the most fashionable hotels, and driving a cart and tandem, and paying assiduous attention to a young heiress in the city, daughter of a manufacturer and street-car magnate; but latterly he had taken a room at Mrs. Starling's, "in order," he gave out, "that he might be quiet for a time," as a duke or duchess or something—I am not sure he did not say a king—who was his relative, had died in Europe. He had taken the greater part of the boarding-house by storm, for he was a tall, showy-looking fellow, and would have been handsome but for a hard and shifty eye. And I found myself in a pitiful minority in my aversion to him, which, however, after a while, gained some recruits among the young men, one of them, my young reporter, Kalender, who had moved there from Mrs. Kale's.

The boarding-house keeper's daughter was desperately in love with Pushkin, and, with her mother's able assistance, was making a dead set for him, which partiality the count was using for what it was worth, hardly attempting meantime to disguise his amusement at them. He sang enough to be passable, though his voice was, like his eye, hard and cold; and he used to sing duets with Miss Starling: the method by which, according to a vivacious young Jew, named Isadore Ringarten, who lived in the house, he paid his board. I never knew how he acquired his information, but he was positive.

"I vish," said Isadore, "I could pay my board in vind—vith a little song. Now, I can sing so the Count

he would give me all he is vorth to sing so like I sing; but I am not a count—efen on this side."

However this was, Pushkin paid the girl enough attention to turn the poor thing's head, and made her treat harshly my reporter, Kalender, who was deeply in love with her, and spent all his salary on her for flowers, and lavished theatre tickets on her.

The evening before I left I had to call Pushkin down, who had been drinking a little, and I must say, when I called, he came promptly. It was after dinner in "the smoking room," as the apartment was called, and he began to ridicule poor Victoria cruelly, saying she had told him her hair was yellow like that of the girls of his own country, and he had told her, no, that hers was natural, while theirs was always dyed, and she swallowed it.

"She is in loaf mit me. She swallow whatefer I gif her—" he laughed. The others laughed, too. But I did not. I thought of Lilian Poole and Peck. Perhaps, I was thinking of my money, and I know I thought of the account of the ball which took place the day I arrived. I told him what I thought of his ridiculing a girl he flattered so to her face. He turned on me, his eyes snapping, his face flushed, but his manner cool and his voice level.

"Ha-ah! Are you in loaf mit her, too, like poor Kalender, who spent all hees moneys on her, and what she laugh at to make me amused? I gif her to you, den. I too not want her—I haf had her, you can take her."

He made a gesture as if tossing something contemptu-

ously into my arms, and put his cigarette back in his teeth and drew a long breath. There were none but men present, and some of them had stopped laughing and were looking grave.

"No, I am not in love with her," I said quietly, standing up. "I only will not allow you to speak so of any lady in my presence—that is all." I was thinking of a girl who lived in a sunny house, and had once taken a lot of little dirty-faced children to feed them, and once had smiled into my eyes. I only knew her name, but her violets were in my pocket near my heart. I was perfectly calm in my manner and my face had whitened, and he mistook it, for he blurted out:

"Oh! I vill nod? I vill nod speaks in your presence. You vill gif me one little lesson? You who know te vorl so vell. I tank you, Millot!"

He bowed low before me, spreading out his arms, and some of the others tittered. It encouraged him and he straightened up and stepped in front of me.

"I vill tell you vat I vill does," he proceeded. "I vill say vat I tam please before you about anybodies." He paused and cast about for something which would prove his boast. "Tere is nod a woman in tis town or in America, py tam! that vill nod gif herself to fon title—to me if I hax her, and say, 'tank you, Count.' Ha, ah?" He bent his body forward and stuck his face almost into mine with a gesture as insulting as he could make it, and as I stepped back a pace to get a firm stand, he stuck out his tongue and wagged his head in derision. The next second he had turned almost

a somersault. I had taken boxing lessons since Wolffert thrashed me. I saw the bottom of his boots. He was at precisely the right distance for me and I caught him fairly in the mouth. His head struck the floor and he lay so still that for a few moments I thought I had killed him. But after a little he came to and began to rise.

"Get up," I said, "and apologize to these gentlemen and to me." I caught him and dragged him to his feet and faced him around.

"You haf insulted me. I vill see about tis," he spluttered, turning away. But I caught him with a grip on his shoulder and steadied him. The others were all on my side now; but I did not see them, I saw only him.

"Apologize, or I will fling you out of the window." He apologized.

The affair passed. The Count explained his bruises by some story that he had been run down by a bicycle, to which I learned he afterward added a little fiction about having stopped a runaway and having saved some one. But I had left before this little touch occurred to him. Mrs. Starling must have had some idea of the collision, though not of the original cause; for she was very decided in the expression of her wishes to have possession of "the dressing room" that night for the "gentleman," and I yielded possession.

The curious thing about it was that one reason I could not pay Mrs. Starling again in advance was that he still had my money which he had borrowed the day after I had arrived.

From Mrs. Starling's I went back to my old boarding-house, kept by Mrs. Kale, as a much cheaper one, in a much poorer neighborhood, where I was not asked to pay in advance, but paid at the end of the month by pawning my scarf-pins and shirt studs, and gradually everything else I had.

I was brought up to go to church, my people having all been earnest Christians and devoted church people; but in my college years I had gone through the usual conceited phase of callow agnosticism; and partly from this intellectual juvenile disease and partly from self-indulgence, I had allowed the habit to drop into desuetude, and later, during my first years at the bar, I had been gradually dropping it altogether. My conscience, however, was never quite easy about it. My mother used to say that the promise as to training up a child in the way he should go was not to be fulfilled in youth, but in age, and as my years advanced, I began to find that the training of childhood counted for more and more. Lilian Poole, however, had no more religion than a cat. She wished to be comfortable and to follow the general habit of the feline class to which she belonged. She went to the Episcopal Church because it was fashionable, and whenever she had half an excuse she stayed away from church unless it were on a new-bonnet Sunday, like Easter or some such an occasion, when she made up by the lowness of her genuflexions and the apparent devoutness of her demeanor for all omissions. I must confess that I was very easily influenced by her at that time, and was quite as ready to

absent myself from church as she was, though I should have had a much deeper feeling for her if she had not violated what I esteemed a canon of life, that women, at least, should profess religion, and if she had not pretended to have questionings herself as to matters as far beyond her intellect as the Copernican system or Kepler's laws. I remember quoting to her once Dr. Johnson's reply to Boswell, when the latter asked if Poole, the actor, were not an atheist: "Yes, sir, as a dog is an atheist; he has not thought on the matter at all."

"Dr. Samuel Johnson?" she asked. "You mean the one who wrote the Dictionary?" and I saw that she was so pleased with her literary knowledge in knowing his name that she never gave a thought to the matter that we were discussing, so let it drop.

As David said, that in his trouble he called upon the Lord, so now, in my solitude and poverty, I began once more to think on serious things, and when Sunday came I would dress up and go to church, partly in obedience to the feeling I speak of, and partly to be associated with people well dressed and good mannered, or passably so. The church I selected was a large stone edifice, St. ———'s, with a gilded cross on its somewhat stumpy spire, toward which I saw a richly clad congregation wending their way Sunday morning.

The rector, as was stated in gilded letters on a large sign, was the Rev. Dr. Bartholomew Capon. I cannot say that the congregation were especially refined looking or particularly cordial; in fact, they were very far

from cordial, and the solemn verger to whom I spoke, after turning a deaf ear to my request for a seat, took occasion, as soon as he had bowed and scraped a richly dressed, stout lady up the aisle, to look me over on the sly, not omitting my shoes, before he allowed me to take a seat in one of the rear pews.

The preacher—"The Rector," as he spoke of himself in the notices, when he occasionally waived the rather frequent first personal pronoun—was a middle-aged gentleman with a florid complexion, a sonorous voice, a comfortable round person, and fair hands of which he was far from ashamed; for he had what, but for my reverence for the cloth, I should call a trick of using his hand with a voluminous, fine cambric handkerchief held loosely in it. His face was self-contained rather than strong, and handsome rather than pleasing. He was so good-looking that it set me on reflecting what relation looks bear to the rectorship of large and fashionable churches; for, as I recalled it, nearly all the rectors of such churches were men of looks, and it came to me that when Sir Roger de Coverley requested his old college friend to send him down a chaplain, he desired him to find out a man rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man who knew something of backgammon. His sermon was altogether a secondary consideration, for he could always read one of the Bishop of St. Asaph's or Dr. South's or Dr. Tillotson's. Possibly, it is something of the same feeling that subordinates the sermons to the looks of rectors of fashionable

churches. However, I did not have long to reflect on that idea, for my thoughts were given a new and permanently different, not to say pleasanter, direction, by the sudden appearance of a trim figure, clad in a gray suit and large gray hat, which, as it moved up the aisle, quite eclipsed for me "the priest and all the people." I was struck, first, by the easy grace with which the young girl moved. But, before she had turned into her pew and I caught sight of her face under the large hat which had hidden it, I knew it was my young lady, Miss Leigh, whom I had helped up on the train and afterward into her carriage. It is not too much to say that the Rev. Dr. Capon secured that moment a new permanent member of his congregation. Before the service was over, however, I had been solemnized by her simple and unaffected devoutness, and when, in one of the chants, I caught a clear liquid note perfectly sweet and birdlike, I felt as though I had made a new and charming discovery.

The rector gave a number of notices from which I felt the church must be one of the great forces of the city for work among the poor, yet, when I glanced around, I could not see a poor person in the pews except myself and two old ladies in rusty black, who had been seated near the door. I was struck by the interest shown in the notices by my young lady of the large hat, from whose shapely little head with its well-coiled brown hair my eyes did not long stray.

"I have," he said, "in addition to the notable work already mentioned, carried on, through my assistant in

charge, the work of St. Andrew's chapel with gratifying success. This work has reached, and I am glad to be able to say, is reaching more than ever before, the great ignorant class that swarms in our midst, and exhibits a tendency to unrest that is most disturbing. This is the class which causes most of the uneasiness felt in the minds of the thoughtful."

I observed that he did not mention the name of "the assistant in charge," and my sympathy rather went out to the nameless priest, doing his work without the reward of even being mentioned.

As to the sermon, I can only say that it was twenty minutes long, and appeared aimed exclusively at the sins of Esau (whom I had always esteemed a quite decent sort of fellow), rather than at those of the doctor's congregation, whom he appeared to have a higher opinion of than of the Patriarchs. I recall the text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." He made it very plain that to be pious and prudent was the best way to secure wealth. He held up a worldly motive and guaranteed a worldly reward. Such a sermon as that would have eased the most uneasy conscience in Christendom.

When the congregation came out I dawdled in the aisle until my young lady passed, when I feasted my eyes on her face and finely curved cheek, straight nose, and soft eyes veiled under their long lashes. My two old ladies in black were waiting in the end of a pew and, as I observed by their smiles when she approached,

waiting like myself to see her. I had already recognized them as the old ladies of the bundles, whom I had once helped on the street. How I envied them the smile and cordial greeting they received in return! I made the observation then, which I have often had confirmed since, that tenderness to the aged, like that to the very young, is the mark of a gentle nature.

I heard them say, "We know who has done the work out at the Chapel," and she replied, "Oh! no, you must not think that. My poor work has been nothing. Your friend has done it all, and I think that the Doctor ought to have said so," to which they assented warmly, and I did the same, though I did not know their friend's name.

As I had nowhere to go in particular, I strolled slowly up the street, and then walked back again. And as I neared the church, I met the rector who had just left his robing-room. He was a fine-looking man on the street as well as in the chancel, and I was prompted to speak to him, and say that I had just heard him preach. He was, however, too impatient at my accosting him and so manifestly suspicious that I quickly regretted my impulse. His, "Well, what is it?" was so prompt on his lips and his suspicion of me was so clear in his cold, bluish eyes, that I drew myself up and replied: "Oh! nothing. I was only going to say that I had just heard you preach—that's all."

"Oh! Ah! Well, I'm much obliged. I'm very glad if I've helped you." He pulled out his watch.

"Helped me! You haven't," I said dryly and turned away.

A quarter of an hour later, as I strolled along the street lonely and forlorn, I saw him hurrying up the steps of the large house which had been pointed out to me as Mrs. Argand's, the great philanthropist.

XVII

THE GULF

As I saw more of the city, its vastness, its might and its inhumanity grew on me. It was a world in itself, a world constructed on lines as different from that in which I had lived as if it had been Mars; a city as different from the smaller cities I had known as if it had been Babylon or Nineveh. The contrasts were as great as they could have been in the capitals Sardanapalus built—structures so vast that they must have dwarfed the towers of Sardis—so rich and splendid that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon must have been outshone—reared their stupendous bulk into the smoky air and cast into perpetual shade all that lay near them. Hard beside their towering mass lay a region filled with the wretched tenements of the poor, and a little further off the houses of the well-to-do. And there was not a greater contrast between the vastness of the one and the pitiful squalor of the other than between the life of the owners of the former and that of the denizens of the closely packed tenements which dwindled in their shadow. Splendor and squalor were divided often only by a brick wall. The roar of the tide that swept through the teeming streets drowned the cry of wretchedness, and only the wretched knew how loud it was. I had never seen such wealth, and I had never dreamed of such poverty.

The vulgar make the parade; the refined pass so quietly as scarcely to be observed. The vulgarity of the display of riches began to oppress me. I discovered later the great store of refinement, goodness and sweetness that was hidden in the homes alike of an element of the wealthy, the merely well-to-do and the poor. But for a time it was all eclipsed by the glare of the vulgar and irresponsible rich. Arrogance, discontent, hardness, vulgarity, were stamped in many faces, and spoke in every movement of many of those I saw, even of the most richly dressed.

I think it was more the vulgarity and insolence of those I saw decked in the regalia of wealth than anything else—than even my own poverty—that changed my views and turned me for a time from my easy indifference as to social conditions toward a recognition that those conditions are ridiculously antiquated, a bent I have never quite got over, though I was later drawn back to a more conservative point of view than, under the hatred of sham and the spur of want, I was driven to occupy for some time. They have no traditions and no ideals. They know no standard but wealth, and possess no ability to display it but through parade. They feel it necessary to prove their novel position by continual assertion. They think that wealth has exempted them from decency. They mistake civility for servility and rudeness for gentility. Their best effort is only a counterfeit, a poor imitation of what they imagine to be the manners of the upper class abroad whose indifferent manners they ape.

"Misery loves company," and when I wanted comfort I left the section of splendor and display, of riotous extravagance and glittering wealth, and went to those poorer than myself; a practice I can commend from experience.

When I got so desperate that I could not stand it any longer, and was afraid I might fall down dead or do myself violence, I used to turn my steps in another direction and walk through the poorer part of the city—not the worst part—where there was nothing but dirt and squalor and filth: that sickened me, and I had never had much sympathy with the class that lived there. They always appeared contented enough with their surroundings and rather to enjoy themselves in their own way. And not the successful workman's quarter. There was an assurance and assumption there that offended me. The assumption bred of sudden success, no matter in what class, is everywhere equally vulgar after its kind. It was the part of the city where the people were respectable, but where they could just hold on with all their struggling and striving, that I used to go into; the part where there were patches, not rags; and sometimes an effort to keep down the dirt, and where a bit of a plant in a little pot or a little cheap ornament in a window told of the spark of sentiment that could yet live amid the poverty and hardness about it. They always place them in the windows, partly, no doubt, to get the light, and partly, perhaps, to show passers-by that there is something within better than might be looked for next door. These people on their

holidays always make toward the open country; they try to get away from their robuster, more successful brothers, and get back near to Nature—the old mother that cares nothing for success; and repays only according to the love her children bear her. Here I often walked as I grew more wretched.

In this section I used to see people with whom I felt in touch: a man with the badgered look in his eye that made me know that he was at bay; or a woman with that resigned air which hopeless struggling stamps in the face and binds on the shoulders. These drew me nearer to my kind, and made me feel that there were others in a harder case than I, and gave me a desire to help them. I came to know some of them by sight and the houses in which they lived, and sometimes I spoke to them and exchanged a word or two, and the effort to take a cheerful view with them helped me, and sent me back to my little lonely cubby-hole cheered and in some sort comforted and resolute to hold out a little longer. But it was hungry work.

This element composed the great body of the population, but deep down below them lay a yet lower element weltering in an infinite and hopeless misery to which even the poor class I speak of were alien. They were generically spoken of at times as the criminal classes. They were not this at all, though among them were many criminals—driven to crime by necessity—because there was no means for them to subsist, no possible means nor hope outside of their casual and occasional violation of the statute law by which they

secure enough for empty bellies and freezing bodies merely to keep alive. They live among and on the poor, and one of the bitterest trials of poverty is the continual presence and preying of these parasites who like other vermin pursue them and cannot be kept off. Their only common crime is desperate, infinite poverty —poverty beyond hope, for they have nothing—not work, nor the hope of work—not even the power to work, if it should be offered them As the well-to-do look with anxiety to the loss of their property and the consequent sinking to some lower plane of moderate poverty, so the poor look with shuddering or, at last, with despair to sinking into the slough of this hopeless state for which there is no name, because none has been devised adequate to describe its desperate misery. Often but a block, or even but a wall divides the reeking slum where they creep and fester and rot, from the broad, well-lighted, smooth-paved avenue where irresponsible wealth goes clattering by. in its wild orgy of extravagance and reckless mirth. The eye of the mangy and starving wolf from his thicket gleams dully at the glittering pageant of heartless irresponsibility and waste. Should the pack ever find a leader bold enough to spring, what will be the end?

At present they are hungry enough, but they have not organized; they are not yet a hunting pack, but only scattered bands, slinking about hungrily, fighting and preying on each other, the larger bands with the bolder leaders driving off the weaker and unorganized. But let them all organize once and the end will not be yet.

Day after day I saw my last few dollars leak away, and, though I replenished my thin purse at times by pawning everything pawnable I had, yet this, too, gradually oozed away. Fortunately I had plenty of clothes, which I had bought in my flush days, so I could still make a respectable appearance.

As money got low all sorts of schemes used to present themselves to me to replenish my pocket. One was to go out as a laborer on the streets, clean bricks, or do anything. I was not lazy. I would have walked around the world for a case. I do not think I was ashamed of it, for I knew it was respectable, but I was afraid some one I knew might pass by; I was afraid that Pushkin or Mrs. Starling might see me, and—yes, that that young girl from the colonial house might recognize me. I had often thought of her violets since I had dropped them into my pocket-book. And now, when this idea came to me, I took them out and looked at them. They still retained a faint fragrance. What would be the result if she should pass by and see me cleaning bricks—me a laborer, and Pushkin—the thoughts came together—should see me? I would win on my own line if it took me all my life.

The idea of Pushkin suggested another plan. Why not gamble? Gambling was gentlemanly—at least, gentlemen gambled. But did they play for a living? I had gambled a little myself in the past; played poker, and, like most men, prided myself on my game, though I generally lost in the long run; and when I was making good resolutions after my failure, I had made up my

mind never to play again anywhere. And I had always held to the opinion that, as soon as a man played for his living, he crossed the line and ceased to be a gentleman. Now, however, it began to appear to me as if this were the only plan by which I could make anything, and as if I should have a good excuse for breaking my resolution. I resisted the temptation for some time; but one night, when I had pawned nearly everything and had only three or four dollars left, I went out, and after a long but half-hearted battle gave up, as such are always lost, and turned into a street across an alley from my office where I knew there was a gambling place over a saloon kept by one Mick Raffity. I went boldly up the stairs. Even as I mounted them I felt a sort of exhilaration. I stopped at the door and my old resolution not to play again stirred and struggled a little. I caught it, however, with a sort of grip almost physical, and gave it a shake till it was quiet. I knew I should win. The blaze of light within cheered me, and, without hesitating an instant, I walked across the room to where a crowd stood watching the play of some one seated at a table. It was a large and richly decorated room, with a few rather daring pictures on the walls and much gilding about the ceiling. The hot air, heavy with tobacco smoke and fumes of one kind and another, met me in a blast as I entered, and involuntarily I thought of a sweat-shop I had once seen in my earlier days. But the sensation passed and left me warm and exhilarated. As I passed along, a man looked at me and half nodded. I knew he was the proprietor. I made my way in and

caught the dealer's expressionless eye, and taking out a note as carelessly as if my pockets were stuffed with them, I glanced over the board to select my bet. At one end of the table sat the large, heavy-browed, middle-aged man I had run into one night on the stairway leading from the alley to the building where I had my office. He was somewhat tipsy and evidently in bad luck; for he was heated and was betting wildly. Near by sat a big, sour-looking fellow, flashily dressed, whom I recognized as having been one of my fellow-travellers on the side-tracked train, the one who had talked to the trainmen of their wrongs. He still wore his paste diamonds, his silk hat and patent-leather shoes. But I took little notice of these. Casually, as I dropped my note, my eye fell on the player at the middle of the table. He was surrounded by stacks of chips. As I looked he raked in a new pile; at least a hundred dollars, and he never changed a particle. He was calmer than the dealer before him. He was in evening dress and success had given him quite an air. I caught up my note without knowing it and fell back behind a group of young men who had just come up. Curious things happen sometimes. I found my note doubled up in my hand when I had got out of doors, a quarter of an hour later. All I remember is my revulsion at seeing that gambler sitting there raking in money so calmly, with my money for his stake in his pocket, and I turned out for him: an adventurer who said all American women were at his bidding. It recalled to me the girl I had seen on the train and had handed, later,

into her carriage, and the good resolutions I had formed. And it strung me up like wine. I felt that I was a coward to have come there and as bad as Pushkin.

Just as I turned to leave the place a party of young fellows entered the room. They had come from a dinner at Mr. Leigh's, as I understood from their talk, and were "going on" to a dance unless the luck should run to suit them. They were in high spirits, "Mr. Leigh's champagne" having done its work, and they were evidently habitués of the place, and good patrons, I judged, from the obsequious respect paid them by the attendants. The leader of them was a large, rather good-looking young fellow, but with marks of dissipation on a face without a line of refinement in it. The others all seemed to be his followers. They greeted familiarly and by name the eager attendants who rushed forward to take their coats, and the leader asked them casually who was in to-night.

"The Count's here, I think, sir," said one whom they called Billy.

"The Count! Coll McSheen's staked him again," said the young leader. "And he swore to me he'd never let him have another cent, with oaths enough to damn him deeper than he will be damned anyhow. Come on, I'll skin him clean."

I lingered for a moment to see him "skin" Pushkin.

They sauntered up to the table and, after a greeting to the Count, began to toss bills on the board as though they grew on trees. The least of them would have kept

me going for months. I had never seen money handled so before and it staggered me.

"Who is that young man?" I asked of a man near me, nodding toward the leader. "He must be pretty rich."

"Rich! You bet. He's Jim Canter. Got all his daddy's money and going to get all the Argand and Leigh piles some day. He'll need it, too," added my informant.

"I should think so." I recalled his name in connection with Miss Leigh's name in the account of the ball, and I was feeling a little bitter.

"Why, he'd just as lief try to corner water as to bet a hundred dollar bill on a card. This is just play to him. He'd give all he'd win to-night to any one of his women."

"His women?"

"Yes. He's one of the real upper class."

"The upper class!" So this was the idea of the upper class held by this man and his kind! My soul revolted at the thought of this man standing as the type of our upper class, and I was turning away when Pushkin shoved back his chair. As I turned he looked up and I saw him start, though I did not catch his glance. The dealer saw him, too, and as he looked at me I caught his eye. He motioned to me, but I took no notice. As I walked out the man near the door spoke to me.

"There's supper in the next room."

"Thank you. I don't want it."

"Come in again. Better luck to-morrow."

"For you, I hope," I said, and I saw his mystification.

I had of late been having an uncomfortable thought which was beginning to worry me. The idea of doing away with myself had suggested itself to me from time to time. I do not mean that I ever thought I should really do it; for when I reflected seriously, I knew I should not. In the first place, I was afraid; and in the next place, I never gave up the belief that I should some day achieve success. When I analyzed my feelings I found that the true name for my unhappiness was egotism. But the idea would come up to me and now began to pester me. I had a pistol which I could never bring myself to pawn, though nearly everything else was pledged. I put the pistol away; but this did not help matters; it looked like cowardice. So that evening I had taken the pistol out and put it into my pocket when I went into the street. If I could only catch some burglar breaking into a bank, or some ruffian beating a woman, or some scoundrel committing any crime, it would attract attention, and I might get work. I often used to think thus, but nothing ever happened, and I knew nothing would happen that evening when I walked out of the gambling house. So presently the pistol began to be in my way, and my mind went to working again on the ease with which I could go to my office and lock myself in. Still I kept on, and presently I found myself near the river, a black stream that I had often thought of as the Styx. It was as black and silent now, as it slipped on in the darkness, as the River of Death.

I was sauntering along, chewing the cud of fancy, wholly bitter—and sinking lower and lower every step in the slough of despond, working over what would come if I should suddenly chuck up the whole business and get out of life—pondering how I should destroy all marks by which there could be any possibility of identification, when the current of my thoughts, if that moody train of dismal reflection could be dignified with such a name, was turned aside by a small incident. As I wandered on in the darkness, the figure of a woman standing—a shadow in the shadow—at a corner of an alley arrested my attention. Even in the gloom the attitude of dejection was such as to strike me, and I saw or felt, I know not which, that her eyes were on me, and that in some dim, distant way they contained an appeal. I saw that she was young, and in the dusk the oval outline of a face that might have both refinement and beauty challenged my attention. Was she a beggar or only an unhappy outcast, waiting in the darkness for the sad reward which evil chance might fling to her wretchedness? I put my hand in my pocket, thinking that she might beg of me, and I would give her a small portion of my slender store, but she said nothing and I passed on. After a little, however, still thinking of her dejected air and with a sudden sympathy for her wretchedness, I turned back. She was still standing where I left her. I passed slowly by her, but she said nothing, though I felt again that her eyes were on me. Then my curiosity or possibly, I may say, my interest, being aroused, I turned again and walked by her.

"Why so sad to-night?" I said, with words which might have appeared flippant, but in a tone which she instantly recognized for sympathy. She turned half away and said nothing and I stood silent watching her, for her face must once have been almost beautiful, though it was now sadly marred, and an ugly scar across her eye and cheek, as if it might have come from the slash of a razor, made that side drawn and distorted.

"Do you want money?"

She slowly shook her head without looking at me.

"What is it, then? Maybe, I can help you?"

She turned slowly and looked at me with such indescribable hopelessness in her face that my heart went out to her.

"No, I'm past help now."

"Oh, no, you're not." My spirits rose with the words, and I felt suddenly as if I had risen out of the slough which had been engulfing me, and as though I had gotten my feet on a firm place where I could reach out a hand to help this despairing and sinking sister.

"Yes, past help now."

"Come and walk with me." And as she did not stir, I took her hand and drew it through my arm and gently led her forward along the street. I had a strange feeling as I walked along. I somehow felt as though I had escaped from something which had been dragging me down. It was a strange walk and a strange and tragic story that she told me—of having left her home in the country, inspired by the desire to do something and be something more than she was, a simple farmer's daugh-

ter in another State, with some little education such as the country schools could give; of having secured a position in a big shop where, for a small sum, she worked all day and learned to see and love fine clothes and beautiful things; of having fallen in with one or two gay companions in this and other shops who wore the fine clothes and had the beautiful things she admired; of having been put forward because she was pretty and polite; and then of having met a young man, well dressed and with fine manners; of having fallen in love with him and of having accepted his attentions and his gifts; and then, of having been led astray by him; and then—of such an act of base betrayal as, had I not had it substantiated afterward in every horrid detail, I should never have believed. I had known something of the wickedness of men and the evil of an uncontrolled life in the city, where the vilest passions of the heart are given play, but I had never dreamed of anything so revolting as the story this girl told me that night. She had been deliberately and with malice aforethought lured not only to her destruction but to a life of slavery so vile as to be unbelievable. The man who had secured her heart used his power over her to seize and sell her into a slavery for which there is no name which could be used on the printed page. Here, stricken by the horror of her situation, she had attempted to escape from her captors, but had been bodily beaten into submission. Then she had made a wild dash for liberty and had been seized and slashed with a knife until she fell under her wounds and her life was in imminent danger.

From this time she gave up and became the slave of the woman of the house: "Smooth Ally," she said they called her; but she would not give me her name or her address. She would have her killed, she feared, if she did so. Here she gradually had yielded to her fate and had lived in company with her other slaves, some willing, some as unwilling as herself, until finally her place was needed for one more useful to her owner, when she had been handed on from one owner to another, always sinking in the scale lower and lower, until at last she had been turned into the street with her choice limited only to the river or the gutter. Long before she had finished her story I had made up my mind that life still held for me something which I might do, however poor and useless I knew myself to be. The only person I could think of who might help her was Miss Leigh. How could I reach her? Could I write her of this poor creature? She could not go back to her home, she said, for she knew that they had heard of her life, and they were "good and Christian people." She used to write to and hear from them, but it had been two years and more since she had written or heard now. Still she gave me what she said was her father's address in another State, and I told her I would find out how they felt about her and would let her know. I gave her a part of what I had. It was very little, and I have often wished since then that I had had the courage to give her all.

I was walking on with her, trying to think of some place where she might find a shelter and be taken care of until her friends could be informed where she was,

when, in one of the streets in front of a bar-room, we heard mingled laughter and singing and found a group of young men, ruffians and loafers, standing on the sidewalk, laughing at the singers who stood in the street. As we drew near, I saw that the latter were a small group of the Salvation Army, and it appeared to me a providence. Here were some who might help her. At the moment that we approached they ended the dirge-like hymn they had been singing, and kneeling down in the street one of them offered a prayer, after which a woman handed around something like a tambourine, asking for a collection. The jeers that she encountered might have daunted a much bolder spirit than mine, and as each man either put in or pretended to put something in, one a cent, another a button or a cigarette-stump, she responded, "Thank you and God bless you." I was ashamed to make an appeal to them there for the poor girl, so I walked with her a little further on and waited until the blue-clad detachment came along and their tormentors retired to warm themselves, without and within, in the saloon in front of which they had been standing. I accosted the woman who had taken up the collection and asked her if she could take care of a poor girl who needed help badly, and I was struck by the kindness with which she turned and, after a moment's glance, held out her hand to the girl.

"Come with us," she said, "and we will take you where you will find friends."

Even then the young woman appeared too frightened to accept her invitation. She clung to me and seemed to

rely upon me, asking me to go with her, but partly from shame and partly from what may possibly have been a better motive, I told her my way led elsewhere, and, after persuasion, she went with the Salvationists, and I walked home happier than I had been in some time.

I even took some steps to call public attention to the horrible story the poor Magdalen had told me of her frightful experience, and actually wrote it up; but when I took it to a paper—the one that had published my first article—I was given to understand that the account was quite incredible. The editor, a fox-faced man of middle age, with whom my paper secured me the honor of an interview, informed me that the story was an old one, and that they had investigated it thoroughly, and found it without the slightest foundation. If I wanted further proof of this, he said, he would refer me to Mr. Collis McSheen, one of the leading lawyers in the city, who had conducted the investigation.

XVIII

THE DRUMMER

I believe Mrs. Kale would have let me stay on free almost indefinitely; for she was a kind-hearted soul, much imposed on by her boarders. But I had been playing the gentleman there, and I could not bring myself to come down in her esteem. I really did not know whether I should be able to continue to pay her; so when my time was up, I moved again, to my landlady's great surprise, and she thought me stuck up and ungrateful, and was a little hurt over it, when, in fact, I only did not want to cheat her, and was moving out to the poorest part of the city, to a little house on which I had observed, one afternoon during one of my strolls, the notice of a room for rent at a dollar a week. I think a rose-bush carefully trained over the door decided me to take it. It gave me a bit of home-feeling. The violet, of course, is in color and delicacy the half-ethereal emblem of the tenderest sentiment of the heart. "The violets all withered when my father died," sighed poor Ophelia. And next to violets, a rose-bush, growing in the sun and dew, has ever stood to me for the purest sentiment that the heart can hold.

I heard shortly afterward of the engagement of Miss Lilian Poole to the man she used to laugh at; but after a single wave of mortification that Peck should have won where I had lost, I did not mind it. I went out to look

at the sunny house with the trees and the rose-bushes about it and wonder how I could meet Miss Leigh.

The room I took when I left Mrs. Kale's was only a cupboard some nine feet by six in the little house I have mentioned; but it was spotlessly clean, like the kind-looking, stout, blue-eyed Teuton woman who, with skirt tucked up, came to the door when I applied for lodging, and, as the price was nearer my figure than any other I had seen, I closed with Mrs. Loewen, and the afternoon I left Mrs. Kale's sent my trunk over in advance. It held the entire accumulation of my life. There was something about the place and the woman that attracted me. As poor as the house was, it was beyond the squalid quarter and well out in the edge of the city, with a bit of grass before it, and there were not only plants in the windows well cared for; but there was even a rose-bush beside the door making a feeble attempt to clamber over it with the aid of strings and straps carefully adjusted.

The only question my landlady asked me was whether I was a musician, and when I told her no, but that I was very fond of music, she appeared satisfied. Her husband, she said, was a drummer.

I asked if I might bring my dog, and she assented even to this.

"Elsa was fond of animals," she said.

When I bade good-by to Mrs. Kale and my friends at the boarding-house, I was pleased at the real regret they showed at my leaving. Miss Pansy and Miss Pinky came down to the drawing-room in their "best"

to say good-by; Miss Pinky with her "scratch" quite straight. And Miss Pansy said if they ever went back home she hoped very much I would honor them by coming to see them, while Miss Pinky, with a more practical turn, hoped I would come and see them "there —and you may even bring your dog with you," she added, with what I knew was a proof of real friendship. I promised faithfully to come, for I was touched by the kindness of the two old ladies who, like myself, had slipped from the sphere in which they had belonged, and I was rather grim at the reflection that they had been brought there by others, while I had no one to blame but myself—a solemn fact I was just beginning to face.

When I walked out of the house I was in a rather low state of mind. I felt that it was the last day when I could make any pretension to being a gentleman. I had been slipping down, down, and now I was very near the bottom. So I wandered on in the street with Dix at my heels and my pistol in my pocket.

Just then a notice of a concert, placarded on a wall, caught my eye, and I gave myself a shake together as an unmitigated ass, and determined suddenly that I needed some amusement and that a better use for the pistol would be to sell it and go to the concert. I would, at least, be a gentleman once more, and then to-morrow I could start afresh. So I hunted up a pawnshop and raising from the villain who kept it a few dollars on my pistol, had a good supper and then took Dix home and went to the symphony. As it happened, I got one of the best seats in the house. It was a revelation to me—

a revolution in my thoughts and feelings: the great audience, gay with silks and flowers and jewels, filling up all the space about and above me rising up to the very top of the vast auditorium. I did not have time at first to observe them, I only felt them; for just as I entered the Director came out and the audience applauded. It exhilarated me like wine; I felt as if it had been myself they were applauding. Then the music began: The "Tannhauser Overture." It caught me up and bore me away: knighthood, and glory, and love were all about me; the splendor of the contest; the struggle in which a false step, a cowardly weakness might fling away the world; the reward that awaited the victor, and the curse if he gave way, till I found myself dazzled, amazed, and borne down by the deluge of harmonious sound—and could do nothing but lie drifting at the mercy of the whelming tide, and watch, half-drowned, whatever object caught my eye. The first thing I took in was the tall old Drummer who towered above the great bank of dark bodies with swaying arms. Still and solemn he appeared out of the mist, and seemed like some landmark which I must hold on to if I would not be swept away. No one appeared to pay much attention to him, and he appeared oblivious of all but his drums. Now he leant over them and listened to their throbbing, now he beat as if the whole world depended on it. I held on to him and felt somehow as if he were the one to whom the Director looked—the centre of all the music and pomp and mystery, and I must keep him in sight.

I don't know much of what came on the programme after that; for I was wakened by the storm of applause which followed and during the intermission I looked about at the audience around me. They filled the house from floor to roof; every seat was occupied, and the boxes looked like banks of flowers. All the faces were strange to me, though, and I was beginning to feel lonely again, and was turning to my old Drummer, when, sweeping the boxes, my eye fell on a girl who caught me at once. She was sitting a little forward looking across toward the orchestra with so serious an expression on her lovely face that I felt drawn to her even before I took in that she was the girl I had seen on the train and whom I had handed into her carriage. As I gazed at her this came to me—and with it such a warm feeling about my heart as I had not had in a long time. I looked at the men about her, one of whom was the good-looking clergyman, Dr. Capon, and the next instant all my blood was boiling—there, bending down over her, talking into her ear, so close to her that she had to sit forward to escape his polluting touch, was the gambler whom I had heard say not three weeks before that every American girl was open to a proposal from him. I don't know really what happened after that. I only remember wishing I had my pistol back—and being glad that I had pawned it, not sold it; for I made up my mind anew in that theatre that night to live and succeed, and preserve that girl from that adventurer. When the concert was over I watched the direction they took, and made my way through the crowd to the exit by

which they would go into the foyer. There I waited and presently they came along. She was surrounded by a little party and was laughing heartily over something one of them had just said, and was looking, in the rich pink wrap which enveloped her, like a rich pink rosebud. I was gazing at her intently, and caught her eye, and no doubt struck by my look of recognition, she bowed. She had not really thought of me, she was still thinking of what had been said, and it was only a casual bow to some one in a crowd who knows you and catches your eye; but it was a bow, and it was a smiling one, and again that warm feeling surged about my heart which had come when I met her on the street. The next second that fellow came along. He was taller than most of the crowd, and well dressed, was really a handsome enough fellow but for his cold eyes and hard look. The eyes were too bold and the chin not bold enough. He was walking beside a large, blondish girl with shallow blue eyes, who appeared much pleased with herself or with him, but at the moment he was bowing his adieux to her while she was manifestly trying to hold on to him.

"I don't think you are nice a bit," I heard her say, petulantly, as they came up to me. "You have not taken the least notice of me to-night."

This he evidently repudiated, for she pouted and smiled up at him. "Well, then, I'll excuse you this time, but you needn't be running after her. She won't——"

I did not hear the rest. I was thinking of the girl before me.

He was looking over the heads of the people before him, and the next moment was elbowing his way to overtake my young lady. Close to him in the crowd, as he came on, stood Mrs. Starling's daughter, painted, and in her best finery, and I saw her imploring eyes fastened on him eagerly. He glanced at her and she bowed with a gratified light dawning in her face. I saw his face harden. He cut her dead. Poor girl! I saw her pain and the look of disappointment as she furtively followed him with her eyes. He pushed on after my young lady. But I was ahead of him. Just before he reached her, I slipped in, and when he attempted to push by I stood firm before him.

"Beg pardon," he said, trying to put me aside to step ahead of me. I turned my head and over my shoulder looked him in the face.

"I beg *your* pardon."

"Oh!" he said. "How do? Let me by."

"To ply your old trade?" I asked, looking into his eyes, over my shoulder.

"Ah!" I saw the rage come into his face and he swore some foreign oath. He put his hand on my shoulder to push me aside; but I half turned and looked him straight in the eyes and his grasp relaxed. He had felt my grip once—and he knew I was not afraid of him, and thought I was a fool. And his hand fell.

I walked in front of him and kept him back until the party with my young lady in it had passed quite out of the door, and then I let him by. For that evening, at least, I had protected her.

I walked to my lodging with a feeling of more content than I had had in a long time. My heart had a home though I had none. It was as if the shell in which I had been cramped so long were broken and I should at last step out into a new world. I had a definite aim, and one higher than I ever had had before. I was in love with that girl and I made up my mind to win her. As I walked along through the gradually emptying streets my old professor's words came to me. They had been verified. I reviewed my past life and saw as clearly as if in a mirror my failures and false steps. I had moped and sulked with the world; I had sat in my cubby-hole of an office with all my talents as deeply buried as if I had been under the mounds of Troy, and had expected men to unearth me as though I had been treasure.

It may appear to some that I exaggerated my feeling for a girl whom I scarcely knew at all. But love is the least conventional of passions; his victory the most unexpected and unaccountable. He may steal into the heart like a thief or burst in like a robber. The zephyr is not so wooing, the hurricane not so furious. Samson and Hercules lose their strength in his presence and, shorn of their power, surrender at discretion. Mightier than Achilles, wilier than Ulysses, he leads them both captive, and, behind them in his train, the long line of captains whom Petrarch has catalogued as his helpless slaves. Why should it then be thought strange that a poor, weak, foolish, lonely young man should fall before him at his first onset! I confess, I thought it

foolish, and yet so weak was I that I welcomed the arrow that pierced my heart, and as I sauntered homeward through the emptying streets, I hugged to my breast the joy that I loved once more.

As I was on the point of ringing the door-bell there was a heavy step behind me, and there was my old Drummer coming along. He turned in at the little gate. And I explained that I was his new lodger and had been to hear him play.

"Ah! You mean to hear the orchestra?"

"No, I don't. I meant, to hear you—I went to the concert, but I enjoyed you most."

"Ah!" he chuckled at the flattery, and let me in, and taking a survey of me, invited me to come and have a bit of supper with him, which I accepted. His wife came in and waited on us, and he told her what I had said, with pleasure, and she laughed over it and rallied him and accepted it, and accepted me instantly as an old friend. It gave me a new feeling.

A few minutes later there was another arrival. A knock on the street door, and the mother, smiling and winking at her husband, went and let in the newcomers: a plump, round-cheeked girl, the mingled likeness of her two parents, with red cheeks, blue eyes, smooth flaxen hair and that heifer-like look of shyness and content which Teuton maidens have, and behind her a strapping looking young fellow with powerful shoulders, and a neck cased in a net of muscles, a clear pink skin and blue eyes, and with a roll in his gait partly the effect

of his iron muscles and partly of mere bashfulness. I was introduced and the first thing the mother did was to repeat delightedly the compliment I had paid the father. It had gone home, and the simple way the white teeth shone around that little circle and the pride the whole family took in this poor bit of praise, told their simplicity and warmed my heart. The father and mother were evidently pleased with their daughter's young man—for the mother constantly rallied the daughter about Otto and Otto about her, drawing the father in with sly looks and knowing tosses of her head, and occasionally glancing at me to see if I too took in the situation. Although I did not yet know a word of their language, I could understand perfectly what she was saying, and I never passed an evening that gave me a better idea of family happiness, or greater satisfaction. When I went up to my little room I seemed, somehow, to have gotten into a world of reality and content: a new world.

I awaked in a new world—the one I had reached the night before: the land of hope and content—and when I came down-stairs I was as fresh as a shriven soul, and I walked out into the street with Dix at my heel, as though I owned the earth.

The morning was as perfect as though God had just created light. The sky was as blue and the atmosphere as clear as though the rain that had fallen had washed away with the smoke all impurity whatsoever, and scoured the floor of Heaven afresh.

Elsa, with her chequered skirt turned back and a

white apron about her comely figure, was singing as she polished the outer steps, before going to her work in a box factory, and the sun was shining upon her bare head with its smooth hair, and upon the little rose-bush by the door, turning the rain-drops that still hung on it into jewels. She stopped and petted Dix, who had followed me down-stairs, and Dix, who, like his master, loved to be petted by a pretty woman, laid back his ears and rubbed his head against her. And, an hour later, a group of little muddy boys with their books in their hands had been beguiled by a broad puddle on their way to school and were wading in the mud and laughing over the spatters and splotches they were getting on their clothes and ruddy faces. As I watched them, one who had been squeezed out of the fun and stood on the sidewalk looking on and laughing, suddenly seized with fear or envy shouted that if they did "not come on, Mith Thelly would keep them in"; and, stricken with a sudden panic, the whole flock of little sand-pipers started off and ran as hard as their dumpy legs would carry them around the corner. I seemed to be emancipated.

I made my breakfast on a one-cent loaf of bread, taking a little street which, even in that section, was a back street, to eat it in, and for butter amused myself watching a lot of little children (among the last of whom I recognized my muddy boys, who must have found another puddle) lagging in at the door of a small old frame building, which I knew must be their school, though I could not understand why it should be in such

a shanty when all the public schools I had seen were the most palatial structures.

I took the trouble to go by that day and look at the house on the corner. It was as sunny as ever. And when on my way back to my office I passed Miss Leigh, the central figure of a group of fresh looking girls, I felt that the half shy smile of recognition which she gave me was a shaft of light to draw my hopes to something better than I had known. Dix was with me, and he promptly picked out his friend and received from her a greeting which, curiously enough, raised my hopes out of all reason. I began to feel that the dog was a link between us.

XIX

RE-ENTER PECK

It happened that the building in which I had taken an office bore a somewhat questionable reputation. I had selected it because it was cheap, and it was too late when I discovered its character. I had no money to move. The lawyers in it were a nondescript lot—criminal practitioners, straw-bail givers, haunters of police courts, etc.; and the other occupants were as bad—adventurers with wild-cat schemes, ticket-scalpers, cranks, visionaries with fads, frauds, gamblers, and thieves in one field or another, with doubtless a good sprinkling of honest men among them.

It was an old building and rather out of the line of the best growth of the city, but in a convenient and crowded section. The lower floor was occupied with bucket-shops and ticket-scalpers' offices, on the street; and at the back, in a sort of annex on an alley, was a saloon known as Mick Raffity's; the owner being a solid, double-jointed son of Erin, with blue eyes as keen as tacks; and over this saloon was the gambling house where I had been saved by finding Pushkin.

On the second floor, the best offices were a suite occupied by a lawyer named McSheen, a person of considerable distinction, after its own kind, as was the shark created with other fish of the sea after its kind: a lawyer of unusual shrewdness, a keen political boss, and a suc-

cessful business man. I had, as happened, rented a cubby-hole looking out on a narrow well opposite the rear room of his suite.

Collis McSheen was a large, brawny man, with a broad face, a big nose, blue eyes, grizzled black hair, a tight mouth and a coarse fist. He would have turned the scales at two hundred, and he walked with a step as light as a sick-nurse's. The first time I ever saw him was when I ran into him suddenly in a winding, unswept back stairway that came down on an alley from the floor below mine and was used mainly by those in a hurry, and I was conscious even in the dim light that he gave me a look of great keenness. As he appeared in a hurry I gave way to him, with a "Beg pardon" for my unintentional jostle, to which he made no reply except a grunt. I, however, took a good look at him as he passed along under a street lamp, with his firm yet noiseless step—as noiseless as a cat's—and the heavy neck and bulk gave me a sense of his brute strength, which I never lost afterward. I soon came to know that he was a successful jury-lawyer with a gift of eloquence, and a knack of insinuation, and that he was among the most potent of the political bosses of the city, with a power of manipulation unequalled by any politician in the community. He had good manners and a ready smile. He was the attorney or legal agent for a number of wealthy concerns, among them the Argand estate, and had amassed a fortune. He was also "the legal adviser" of one of the afternoon papers, the *Trumpet*, in which, as I learned later, he held, though

it was not generally known, a large and potent interest. He was now looming up as the chief candidate of the popular party for Mayor, an office which he expected to secure a few months later. He was interested in a part of the street-car system of the city, that part in which "the Argand estate" held the controlling interest, and which was, to some extent, the rival system of that known as the "West Line," in which Mr. Leigh held a large interest. I mention these facts because, detached as they appear, they have a strong bearing on my subsequent relation to McSheen, and a certain bearing on my whole future. But, on occasion he was as ready for his own purposes to attack these interests secretly as those opposed to them. He always played his own hand. To quote Kalender "he was deep."

My first real meeting with him gave me an impression of him which I was never able to divest myself of. I was in my little dark cupboard of an office very lonely and reading hard to keep my mind occupied with some other subject than myself, when the door half opened quietly, with or without a preliminary knock, I never could tell which, and a large man insinuated himself in at it and, after one keen look, smiled at me. I recalled afterward how catlike his entrance was. But at the moment I was occupied in gauging him. Still smiling he moved noiselessly around and took his stand with his back to the one window.

"You are Mr. Glave?" he smiled. "Glad to see you?" He had not quite gotten rid of the interrogation.

I expressed my appreciation of his good-will and with, I felt, even more sincerity than his; for I was glad to see any one.

"Always pleased to see young lawyers—specially bright ones." Here I smiled with pleasure that he should so admirably have "sized me up," as the saying goes.

"You are a lawyer also?" I hazarded.

"Yes. Yes. I see you are studious. I always like that in a young man—gives him breadth—scope."

I assented and explained that I had been in politics a little also, all of which he appeared to think in my favor. And so it went on till he knew nearly all about me. In fact, I became quite communicative. It had been so long since I had had a lawyer to talk with. I found him to be a remarkably well-informed man, and with agreeable, rather insinuating manners. He knew something of books too, and he made, I could not tell whether consciously or unconsciously, a number of literary allusions. One of them I recall. It was a Spanish proverb, he said: "The judge is a big man, but give your presents to the clerk."

"Well, you'll do well here if you start right. The tortoise beats the hare, you know—every time—ev-ery time."

I started, so apt was the allusion. I wondered if he could ever have known Peck.

"Yes, I know that. That's what I mean to do," I said.

"Get in with the right sort of folks, then when there's any sweeping done you'll be on the side of the handle."

He was moving around toward the door and was looking out of the window reflecting.

"I have a letter to a gentleman named Leigh," I said. "I have not yet presented it."

"Ah!"

I turned and glanced at him casually and was struck with the singular change that had come over his face. It was as if he had suddenly drawn a fine mask over it. His eyes were calmly fixed on me, yet I could hardly have said that they saw me. His countenance was absolutely expressionless. I have seen the same detached look in a big cat's eyes as he gazed through his bars and through the crowd before him to the far jungle, ocean spaces away. It gave me a sudden shiver and I may have shown that I was startled, but, as I looked, the mask disappeared before my eyes and he was smiling as before.

"Got a pretty daughter?" he said with a manner which offended me, I could hardly tell why.

"I believe so; but I do not know her." I was angry with myself for blushing, and it was plain that he saw it and did not believe me.

"You know a man 't calls himself Count Pushkin?"

"Yes, I know him."

"He knows her and she knows him."

"Does she? I know nothing about that."

"Kind o' makin' a set for him, they say?"

"Is she? I hardly think it likely, if she knows him," I said coldly. I wondered with what malignant intuition he had read my thoughts.

"Oh! A good many people do that. They like the sound. It gives 'em power."

"Power!"

"Yes. Power's a pretty good thing to have. You can—" He looked out of the window and licked his lips in a sort of reverie. He suddenly opened and closed his hand with a gesture of crushing. "Power and money go togither?" And still smiling, with a farewell nod, he noiselessly withdrew and closed the door.

When he was gone I was conscious of a feeling of intense relief, and also of intense antagonism—a feeling I had never had for but one man before—Peck: a feeling which I never got rid of.

One evening a little later I missed Dix. He usually came home even when he strayed off, which was not often, unless as happened he went with Elsa, for whom he had conceived a great fondness, and who loved and petted him in return. It had come to be a great bond between the girl and me, and I think the whole family liked me the better for the dog's love of the daughter. But this evening he did not appear; I knew he was not with Elsa, for I remembered he had been in my office during the afternoon, and in consequence I spent an unhappy night. All sorts of visions floated before my mind, from the prize-ring to the vivisection table. I rather inclined to the former; for I knew his powerful chest and loins and his scarred shoulders would commend him to the fancy. I thought I remembered that he had gone out of my office just before I left and had gone down the steps which led to the alley I have

mentioned. This he sometimes did. I recalled that I was thinking of Miss Eleanor Leigh and had not seen or thought of him between the office and my home.

I was so disturbed about him by bedtime that I went out to hunt for him and returned to my office by the same street I had walked through in the afternoon. When I reached the building in which my office was, I turned into the alley I have mentioned and went up the back stairway. It was now after midnight and it was as black as pitch. When I reached my office, thinking that I might by a bare possibility have locked him in, I opened the door and walked in, closing it softly behind me. The window looked out on the well left for light and air, and was open, and as I opened the door a light was reflected through the window on my wall. I stepped up to close the window and, accidentally looking across the narrow well to see where the light came from, discovered that it was in the back office of Coll McSheen, in which were seated Mr. McSheen and the sour-looking man I had seen on the train with the silk hat and the paste diamond studs, and of all persons in the world, Peck! The name Leigh caught my ear and I involuntarily stopped without being aware that I was listening. As I looked the door opened and a man I recognized as the janitor of the building entered and with him a negro waiter, bearing two bottles of champagne and three glasses. For a moment I felt as though I had been dreaming. For the negro was Jeams. I saw the recognition between him and Peck,

and Jeams's white teeth shone as Peck talked about him. I heard him say:

"No, suh, I don' know nuthin' 't all about him. Ise got to look out for myself. Yes, suh, got a good place an' I'm gwine to keep it!"

He had opened the bottles and poured out the wine, and McSheen gave him a note big enough to make him bow very low and thank him volubly. When he had withdrawn Peck said:

"You've got to look out for that rascal. He's an awfully smart scoundrel."

"Oh! I'll own him, body and soul," said McSheen.

"I wouldn't have him around me."

"Don't worry—he won't fool me. If he does—" He opened and closed his fist with the gesture I had seen him use the first day he paid me a visit.

"Well, let's to business," he said when they had drained their glasses. He looked at the other men. "What do you say, Wringman?"

"You pay me the money and I'll bring the strike all right," said the Labor-leader, "and I'll deliver the vote, too. In ten days there won't be a wheel turning on his road. I'll order every man out that wears a West Line cap or handles a West Line tool."

The "West Line"! This was what the street-car line was called which ran out into the poor section of the city where I lived, which Mr. Leigh controlled.

"That's all right. I'll keep my part. D——n him! I want to break him. I'll show him who runs this town. With his d——d airs."

"That's it," said Peck, leaning forward. "It's your road or his. That's the way I figure it." He rubbed his hands with satisfaction. "I am with you, my friends. You can count on the Poole interest backing you."

"You'll keep the police off?" said the Labor-leader.

"Will I? Watch 'em!" McSheen poured out another glass, and offered the bottle to Peck, who declined it.

"Then it's all right. Well, you'd better make a cash payment down at the start," said the Labor-leader.

McSheen swore. "Do you think I have a bank in my office, or am a faro dealer, that I can put up a pile like that at midnight? Besides, I've always heard there're two bad paymasters—the one that don't pay at all and the one 't pays in advance. You deliver the goods."

"Oh! Come off," said the other. "If you ain't a faro dealer, you own a bank—and you've a barkeeper. Mick's got it downstairs, if you ain't. So put up, or you'll want money sure enough. I know what that strike's worth to you."

McSheen rose and at that moment I became aware of the impropriety of what I was doing, for I had been absolutely absorbed watching Peck, and I moved back, as I did so, knocking over a chair. At the sound the light was instantly extinguished and I left my office and hurried down the stairs, wondering when the blow was to fall.

The afternoon following my surprise of the conference in McSheen's back room, there was a knock at my

door and Peck walked into my office. I was surprised to see what a man-of-fashion air he had donned. He appeared really glad to see me and was so cordial that I almost forgot my first feeling of shame that he should find me in such manifestly straitened circumstances, especially as he began to talk vaguely of a large case he had come out to look after, and I thought he was on the verge of asking me to represent his client.

"You know we own considerable interests out here both in the surface lines and in the P. D. & B. D., he said airily.

"No, I did not know you did. I remember that Mr. Poole once talked to me about some outstanding interests in the P. D. & B. D., and I made some little investigation at the time; I came to the conclusion that his interest had lapsed; but he never employed me."

"Yes, that's a part of the interests I speak of. Mr. Poole is a very careful man."

"Very. Well, you see I have learned my lesson. I have learned economy, at least," I laughed in reply to his question of how I was getting along in my new home. He took as he asked it an appraising glance at the poor little office.

"A very important lesson to learn," he said sententiously. "I am glad I learned it early." He was so smug that I could not help saying,

"You were always economical?"

"Yes, I hope so. I always mean to be. You get much work?"

"No, not much—yet; still, you know, I always had a knack of getting business," I said. "My trouble was that I used to disdain small things and I let others attend to them. I know better than that now. I don't think I have any right to complain."

"Oh—I suppose you have to put in night work, too, then?" he added, after a pause.

This then was the meaning of his call. He wished to know whether I had seen him in Coll McSheen's office the night before. He had delivered himself into my hands. So, I answered lightly.

"Oh! yes, sometimes."

I had led him up to the point and I knew now he was afraid to take a step further. He sheered off.

"Well, tell me something," he said, "if you don't mind. Do you know Mr. Leigh?"

"What Mr. Leigh?"

"Mr. Walter Leigh, the banker."

"I don't mind telling you at all that I do not."

"Oh!"

I thought he was going to offer me a case; but Peck was economical. He already had one lawyer.

"I had a letter of introduction to him from Mr. Poole," I said. "But you can say to Mr. Poole that I never presented it."

"Oh! Ah! Well—I'll tell him."

"Do."

"Do you know Mr. McSheen?"

I nodded "Yes."

"Do you know him well?"

"Does any one know him well?" I parried.

"He has an office in this building?"

I could not, for the life of me, tell whether this was an affirmation or a question. So I merely nodded, which answered in either case. But I was pining to say to him, "Peck, why don't you come out with it and ask me plainly what I know of your conference the other night?" However, I did not. I had learned to play a close game.

"Oh! I saw your nigger, Jeams—ah—the other day."

"Did you? Where is he?" I wanted to find him, and asked innocently enough.

"Back at home."

"How is he getting on?"

"Pretty well, I believe. He's a big rascal."

"Yes, but a pleasant one, and an open one."

Peck suddenly rose, "Well, I must be going. I have an engagement which I must keep." At the door he paused. "By the way, Mrs. Peck begged to be remembered to you."

He had a way of blinking, like a terrapin—slowly. He did so now.

He did not mean his tone to be insolent—only to be insolent himself—but it was.

"I'm very much obliged to her. Remember me to her."

That afternoon I strolled out, hoping to get a glimpse of Miss Leigh. I did so, but Peck was riding in a carriage with her and her father. So he won the last trick,

after all. But the rubber was not over. I was glad that they did not see me, and I returned to my office filled with rage and determined to unmask Peck the first chance I should have, not because he was a trickster and a liar, but because he was applying his trickiness in the direction of Miss Leigh.

That night the weather changed and it turned off cold. I remember it from a small circumstance. The wind appeared to me to have shifted when Miss Leigh's carriage drove out of sight with Peck in it. I went home and had bad dreams. What was Peck doing with the Leighs? Could I have been mistaken in thinking he and McSheen had been talking of Mr. Leigh in their conference? For some time there had been trouble on the street-car lines of the city and a number of small strikes had taken place on a system of lines running across the city and to some extent in competition with the West Line, which Mr. Leigh had an interest in. According to the press the West Line, which ran out into a new section, was growing steadily while the other line was falling back. Could it be that McSheen was endeavoring to secure possession of the West Line? This, too, had been intimated, and Canter, one of the richest men of the town, was said to be behind him. What should I do under the circumstances? Would Peck tell Miss Leigh any lies about me? All these suggestions pestered me and, with the loss of Dix, kept me awake, so that next morning I was in rather a bad humor.

In my walk through the poorer quarter on my way

to my office I used to see a great deal of the children, and it struck me that one of the saddest effects of poverty—the dire poverty of the slum—was the debasement of the children. Cruelty appears to be the natural instinct of the young as they begin to gain in strength. But among the well-to-do and the well-brought-up of all classes it is kept in abeyance and is trained out. But in the class I speak of at a certain age it appears to flower out into absolute brutality. It was the chief drawback to my sojourn in this quarter, for I am very fond of children, and the effect of poverty on the children was the saddest part of my surroundings. To avoid the ruder element, I used to walk of a morning through the little back street where I had discovered that morning the little school for very small children, and I made the acquaintance of a number of the children who attended the school. One little girl in particular interested me. She was the poorest clad of any, but her cheeks were like apples and her chubby wrists were the worst chapped of all; and with her sometimes was a little crippled girl, who walked with a crutch, whom she generally led by the hand in the most motherly way, so small that it was a wonder how she could walk, much more study.

My little girls and I got to that point of intimacy where they would talk to me, and Dix had made friends with them and used to walk beside them as we went along.

The older girl's first name was Janet, but she spoke with a lisp and I could not make out her name with a certainty. Her father had been out of work, she said,

but now was a driver, and her teacher was "Mith Thellen." The little cripple's name was "Sissy"—Sissy Talman. This was all the information I could get out of her. "Mith Thellen" was evidently her goddess.

On the cool, crisp morning after the turn in the weather, I started out rather earlier than usual, intending to hunt for Dix and also to look up Jeams. I bought a copy of the *Trumpet* and was astonished to read an account of trouble among the employees of the West Line, for I had not seen the least sign of it. The piece went on further to intimate that Mr. Leigh had been much embarrassed by his extension of his line out into a thinly populated district and that a strike, which was quite sure to come, might prove very disastrous to him. I somehow felt very angry at the reference to Mr. Leigh and was furious with myself for having written for the *Trumpet.* I walked around through the street where the school was, though without any definite idea whatever, as it was too early for the children. As I passed by the school the door was wide open and I stopped and looked in. The fire was not yet made. The stove was open; the door of the cellar, opening outside, was also open, and at the moment a young woman—the teacher or some one else—was backing up the steps out of the cellar lugging a heavy coal-scuttle. One hand, and a very small one, was supporting her against the side of the wall, helping her push herself up. I stepped forward with a vague pity for any woman having to lift such a weight.

"Won't you let me help you?" I asked.

"Thank you, I believe I can manage it." And she pulled the scuttle to the top, where she planted it, and turned with quite an air of triumph. It was she! my young lady of the sunny house: Miss Leigh! I had not recognized her at all. Her face was all aglow and her eyes were filled with light at a difficulty overcome. I do not know what my face showed; but unless it expressed conflicting emotions, it belied my feelings. I was equally astonished, delighted and embarrassed. I hastened to say something which might put her at her ease and at the same time prove a plea for myself, and open the way to further conversation.

"I was on my way to my law-office, and seeing a lady struggling with so heavy a burden, I had hoped I might have the privilege of assisting her as I should want any other gentleman to do to my sister in a similar case." I meant if I had had a sister.

She thanked me calmly; in fact, very calmly.

"I do it every morning; but this morning, as it is the first cold weather, I piled it a little too high; that is all." She looked toward the door and made a movement.

I wanted to say I would gladly come and lift it for her every morning; that I could carry all her burdens for her. But I was almost afraid even to ask permission again to carry it that morning. As, however, she had given me a peg, I seized it.

"Well, at least, let me carry it this morning," I said, and without waiting for an answer or even venturing to look at her, I caught up the bucket and swung it into

the house, when seeing the sticks all laid in the stove, and wishing to do her further service, without asking her anything more, I poured half the scuttleful into the stove.

"I used to be able to make a fire, when I lived in my old home," I said tentatively; then as I saw a smile coming into her face, I added: "But I'm afraid to try an exhibition of my skill after such boasting," and without waiting further, I backed out, bringing with me only a confused apparition of an angel lifting a coal-scuttle.

I do not remember how I reached my office that day, whether I walked the stone pavements through the prosaic streets or trod on rosy clouds. There were no prosaic streets for me that day. I wondered if the article I had seen in the paper had any foundation. Could Mr. Leigh have lost his fortune? Was this the reason she taught school? I had observed how simply she was dressed, and I thrilled to think that I might be able to rescue her from this drudgery.

The beggars who crossed my path that morning were fortunate. I gave them all my change, even relieving the necessities of several thirsty imposters who beset my way, declaring with unblushing, sodden faces that they had not had a mouthful for days.

I walked past the little school-house that night and lingered at the closed gate, finding a charm in the spot. The little plain house had suddenly become a shrine. It seemed as if she might be hovering near.

The next morning I passed through the same street, and peeped in at the open door. There she was, bend-

ing over the open stove in which she had already lighted her fire, little knowing of the flame she had kindled in my heart. How I cursed myself for being too late to meet her. And yet, perhaps, I should have been afraid to speak to her; for as she turned toward the door, I started on with pumping heart in quite a fright lest she should detect me looking in.

I walked by her old home Sunday afternoon. Flowers bloomed at the windows. As I was turning away, Count Pushkin came out of the door and down the steps. As he turned away from the step his habitual simper changed into a scowl; and a furious joy came into my heart. Something had gone wrong with him within there. I wished I had been near enough to have crossed his path to smile in his face; but I was too distant, and he passed on with clenched fist and black brow.

After this my regular walk was through the street of the baby-school, and when I was so fortunate as to meet Miss Leigh she bowed and smiled to me, though only as a passing acquaintance, whilst I on my part began to plan how I should secure an introduction to her. Her smile was sunshine enough for a day, but I wanted the right to bask in it and I meant to devise a plan. After what I had told Peck, I could not present my letter; I must find some other means. It came in an unexpected way, and through the last person I should have imagined as my sponsor.

XX

MY FIRST CLIENT

But to revert to the morning when I made Miss Leigh's fire for her. I hunted for Dix all day, but without success, and was so busy about it that I did not have time to begin my search for Jeams. That evening, as it was raining hard, I treated myself to the unwonted luxury of a ride home on a street-car. The streets were greasy with a thick, black paste of mud, and the smoke was down on our heads in a dark slop. Like Petrarch, my thoughts were on Laura, and I was repining at the rain mainly because it prevented the possibility of a glimpse of Miss Leigh on the street: a chance I was ever on the watch for.

I boarded an open car just after it started and just before it ran through a short subway. The next moment a man who had run after the car sprang on the step beside me, and, losing his footing, he would probably have fallen and might have been crushed between the car and the edge of the tunnel, which we at that moment were entering, had I not had the good fortune, being on the outer seat, to catch him and hold him up. Even as it was, his coat was torn and my elbow was badly bruised against the pillar at the entrance. I, however, pulled him over across my knees and held him until we had gone through the subway, when I made room for him on the seat beside me.

"That was a close call, my friend," I said. "Don't try that sort of thing too often."

"It was, indeed—the closest I ever had, and I have had some pretty close ones before. If you had not caught me, I would have been in the morgue to-morrow morning."

This I rather repudiated, but as the sequel showed, the idea appeared to have become fixed in his mind. We had some little talk together and I discovered that, like myself, he had come out West to better his fortune, and as he was dressed very plainly, I assumed that, like myself, he had fallen on rather hard times, and I expressed sympathy. "Where have I seen you before?" I asked him.

"On the train once coming from the East."

"Oh! yes." I remembered now. He was the man who knew things.

"You know Mr. McSheen?" he asked irrelevantly.

"Yes—slightly. I have an office in the same building."

I wondered how he knew that I knew him.

"Yes. Well, you want to look out for him. Don't let him fool you. He's deep. What's that running down your sleeve? Why, it's blood! Where did it come from?" He looked much concerned.

"From my arm, I reckon. I hurt it a little back there, but it is nothing."

He refused to be satisfied with my explanation and insisted strongly on my getting off and going with him to see a doctor. I laughed at the idea.

"Why, I haven't any money to pay a doctor," I said.

"It won't cost you a cent. He is a friend of mine and as good a surgeon as any in the city. He's straight —knows his business. You come along."

So, finding that my sleeve was quite soaked with blood, I yielded and went with him to the office of his friend, a young doctor named Traumer, who lived in a part of the town bordering on the working people's section, which, fortunately, was not far from where we got off the car. Also, fortunately, we found him at home. He was a slim young fellow with a quiet, self-assured manner and a clean-cut face, lighted by a pair of frank, blue eyes.

"Doc," said my conductor, "here's a friend of mine who wants a little patching up."

"That's the way with most friends of yours, Bill," said the doctor, who had given me a single keen look. "What's the matter with him? Shot? Or have the pickets been after him?"

"No, he's got his arm smashed saving a man's life."

"What! Well, let's have a look at it. He doesn't look very bad." He helped me off with my coat and, as he glanced at the sleeve, gave a little exclamation.

"Hello!"

"Whose life did he save?" he asked, as he was binding up the arm. "That's partly a mash."

"Mine."

"Oh! I see." He went to work and soon had me bandaged up. "Well, he's all right now. What were you doing?" he asked as he put on the last touches.

"Jumping on a car."

"Ah!" The doctor was manifestly amused. "You observe that our friend is laconic?" he said to me.

"What's that?" asked the other. "Don't prejudice him against me. He don't know anything against me yet—and that's more than some folks can say."

"Who was on that car that you were following?" asked the doctor, with a side glance at my friend. The latter did not change his expression a particle.

"Doc, did you ever hear what the parrot said to herself after she had sicked the dog on, and the dog not seeing anything but her, jumped on her?"

"No—what?"

"'Polly, you talk too d——d much.'"

The doctor chuckled and changed the subject. "What's your labor-friend, Wringman, doing now? What did he come back here for?"

"Same old thing—dodging work."

"He seems to me to work other people pretty well."

The other nodded acquiescingly.

"He's on a new line now. McSheen's got him. Yes, he has," as the doctor looked incredulous.

"What's he after? Who's he working for?"

"Same person—Coll McSheen. Pretty busy, too. Mr. Glave there knows him already."

"Glave!—Glave!" repeated the doctor. "Where did I hear your name? Oh, yes! Do you know a preacher named John Marvel!"

"John Marvel! Why, yes. I went to college with him. I knew him well."

"You knew a good man then."

"He is that," said the other promptly. "If there were more like him I'd be out of a job."

"You know Miss Leigh, too?"

"What Miss Leigh?" My heart warmed at the name and I forgot all about Marvel. How did he know that I knew her?

"'The Angel of the Lost Children.'"

"'The Angel—'? Miss Eleanor Leigh?" Then as he nodded—"Slightly." My heart was now quite warm. "Who called her so?"

"She said she knew you. I look after some of her friends for her."

"Who called her the 'Angel of the Lost Children'?"

"A friend of mine—Leo Wolffert, who works in the slums—a writer. She's always finding and helping some one who is lost, body or soul."

"Leo Wolffert! Do you know him?"

"I guess we all know him, don't we, Doc?" put in the other man. "And so do some of the big ones."

"Rather."

"And the lady, too—she's a good one, too," he added.

I was so much interested in this part of the conversation that I forgot at the moment to ask the doctor where he had known John Marvel and Wolffert.

I, however, asked him what I owed him, and he replied,

"Not a cent. Any of Langton's friends here or John Marvel's friends, or (after a pause) Miss Leigh's friends

may command me. I am only too glad to be able to serve them. It's the only way I can help."

"That's what I told him," said my friend, whose name I heard for the first time. "I told him you weren't one of these Jew doctors that appraise a man as soon as he puts his nose in the door and skin him clean."

"I am a Jew, but I hope I am not one of that kind."

"No; but there are plenty of 'em."

I came away feeling that I had made two friends well worth making. They were real men.

When I parted from my friend he took out of his pocket-book a card. "For my friends," he said, as he handed it to me. When I got to the light I read:

"Wm. Langton, Private Detective."

It was not until long afterward that I knew that the man he was following when he sprang on the car and I saved him was myself, and that I owed the attention to my kinsman and to Mr. Leigh, to whom Peck had given a rather sad account of me. My kinsman had asked him to ascertain how I lived.

I called on my new friend, Langton, earlier than he had expected. In my distress about Dix I consulted him the very next day and he undertook to get him back. I told him I had not a cent to pay him with at present, but some day I should have it and then——

"You'll never owe me a cent as long as you live," he said. "Besides, I'd like to find that dog. I remember him. He's a good one. You say you used the back

stairway at times, opening on the alley near Mick Raffity's?"

"Yes."

He looked away out of the window with a placid expression.

"I wouldn't go down that way too often at night," he said presently.

"Why?"

"Oh! I don't know. You might stumble and break your neck. One or two men have done it."

"Oh! I'll be careful," I laughed. "I'm pretty surefooted."

"You need to be—there. You say your dog's a good fighter?"

"He's a paladin. Can whip any dog I ever saw. I never fought him, but I had a negro boy who used to take him off till I stopped him."

"Well, I'll find him—that is, I'll find where he went."

I thanked him and strolled over across town to try to get a glimpse of the "Angel of the Lost Children." I saw her in a carriage with another young girl, and as I gazed at her she suddenly turned her eyes and looked straight at me, quite as if she had expected to see me, and the smile she gave me, though only that which a pleasant thought wings, lighted my heart for a week.

A day or two later my detective friend dropped into my office.

"Well, I have found him." His face showed that placid expression which, with him, meant deep satisfaction. "The police have him—are holding him in a case,

but you can identify and get him. He was in the hands of a negro dog-stealer and they got him in a raid. They pulled one of the toughest joints in town when there was a fight going on and pinched a full load. The nigger was among them. He put up a pretty stiff fight and they had to hammer him good before they quieted him. He'll go down for ninety days sure. He was a fighter, they said—butted men right and left."

"I'm glad they hammered him—you're sure it's Dix?"

"Sure; he claimed the dog; said he'd raised him. But it didn't go. I knew he'd stolen him because he said he knew you."

"Knew me—a negro? What did he say his name was?"

"They told me—let me see—Professor Jeams—something."

"Not Woodson?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Well, for once in his life he told the truth. He sold me the dog. You say he's in jail? I must go and get him out."

"You'll find it hard work. Fighting the police is a serious crime in this city. A man had better steal, rob, or kill anybody else than fight an officer."

"Who has most pull down there?"

"Well, Coll McSheen has considerable. He runs the police. He may be next Mayor."

I determined, of course, to go at once and see what I could do to get Jeams out of his trouble. I found

him in the common ward among the toughest criminals in the jail—a massive and forbidding looking structure—to get into which appeared for a time almost as difficult as to get out. But on expressing my wish to be accorded an interview with him, I was referred from one official to another, until, with my back to the wall, I came to a heavy, bloated, ill-looking creature who went by the name of Sergeant Byle. I preferred my request to him. I might as well have undertaken to argue with the stone images which were rudely carved as Caryatides beside the entrance. He simply puffed his big black cigar in silence, shook his head, and looked away from me; and my urging had no other effect than to bring a snicker of amusement from a couple of dog-faced shysters who had entered and, with a nod to him, had sunk into greasy chairs.

"Who do you know here?"

A name suddenly occurred to me, and I used it.

"Among others, I know Mr. McSheen," and as I saw his countenance fall, I added, "and he is enough for the present." I looked him sternly in the eye.

He got up out of his seat and actually walked across the room, opened a cupboard and took out a key, then rang a bell.

"Why didn't you say you were a friend of his?" he asked surlily. "A friend of Mr. McSheen can see any one he wants here."

I have discovered that civility will answer with nine-tenths or even nineteen-twentieths of the world, but there is a class of intractable brutes who yield only to

force and who are influenced only by fear, and of them was this sodden ruffian. He led the way now subserviently enough, growling from time to time some explanation, which I took to be his method of apologizing. When, after going through a number of corridors, which were fairly clean and well ventilated, we came at length to the ward where my unfortunate client was confined, the atmosphere was wholly different: hot and fetid and intolerable. The air struck me like a blast from some infernal region, and behind the grating which shut off the miscreants within from even the modified freedom of the outer court was a mass of humanity of all ages, foul enough in appearance to have come from hell.

At the call of the turnkey, there was some interest manifested in their evil faces and some of them shouted back, repeating the name of Jim Woodson; some half derisively, others with more kindliness. At length, out of the mob emerged poor Jeams, but, like Lucifer, Oh, how changed! His head was bandaged with an old cloth, soiled and stained; his mien was dejected, and his face was swollen and bruised. At sight of me, however, he suddenly gave a cry, and springing forward tried to thrust his hands through the bars of the grating to grasp mine. "Lord, God!" he exclaimed. "If it ain't de Captain. Glory be to God! Marse Hen, I knowed you'd come, if you jes' heard 'bout me. Git me out of dis, fur de Lord's sake. Dis is de wuss place I ever has been in in my life. Dey done beat me up and put handcuffs on me, and chain me, and fling

me in de patrol-wagon, and lock me up and sweat me, and put me through the third degree, till I thought if de Lord didn't take mercy 'pon me, I would be gone for sho. Can't you git me out o' dis right away?"

I explained the impossibility of doing this immediately, but assured him that he would soon be gotten out and that I would look after his case and see that he got justice.

"Yes, sir, that is what I want—jestice—I don't ax nothin' but jestice."

"How did you get here?" I demanded. And even in his misery, I could not help being amused to see his countenance fall.

"Dey fetched me here in de patrol-wagon," he said evasively.

"I know that. I mean, for what?"

"Well, dey say, Captain, dat I wus desorderly an' drunk, but you know I don' drink nothin'."

"I know you do, you fool," I said, with some exasperation. "I have no doubt you were what they say, but what I mean is, where is Dix and how did you get hold of him?"

"Well, you see, Marse Hen, it's dthis way," said Jeams falteringly. "I come here huntin' fur you and I couldn' fin' you anywheres, so then I got a place, and while I wus lookin' 'roun' fur you one day, I come 'pon Dix, an' as he wus lost, jes' like you wus, an' he didn't know where you wus, an' you didn't know where he wus, I tuk him along to tek care of him till I could fin' you."

"And incidentally to fight him?" I said.

Again Jeams's countenance fell. "No, sir, that I didn't," he declared stoutly. "Does you think I'd fight dthat dog after what you tol' me?"

"Yes, I do. I know you did, so stop lying about it and tell me where he is, or I will leave you in here to rot till they send you down to the rockpile or the penitentiary."

"Yes, sir; yes, sir, I will. Fur God's sake, don' do dat, Marse Hen. Jes' git me out o' here an' I will tell you everything; but I'll swear I didn't fight him; he jes' got into a fight so, and then jist as he hed licked de stuffin out of dat Barkeep Gallagin's dog, them d——d policemen come in an' hammered me over the head because I didn't want them to rake in de skads and tek Dix 'way from me."

I could not help laughing at his contradictions.

"Well, where is he now?"

"I'll swear, Marse Hen, I don' know. You ax the police. I jes' know he ain't in here, but dey knows where he is. I prays night and day no harm won't happen to him, because dat dog can beat ary dog in this sinful town. I jes' wish you had seen him."

As the turnkey was now showing signs of impatience, I cut Jeams short, thereby saving him the sin of more lies, and with a promise that I would get him bailed out if I could, I came away.

The turnkey had assured me on the way that he would find and return me my dog, and was so sincere in his declaration that nothing would give him more

pleasure than to do this for any friend of Mr. McSheen's, that I made the concession of allowing him to use his efforts in this direction. But I heard nothing more of him.

With the aid of my friend, the detective, I soon learned the names of the police officers who had arrested Jeams, and was enabled to get from them the particulars of the trouble which caused his arrest.

It seemed that, by one of the strange and fortuitous circumstances which so often occur in life, Jeams had come across Dix just outside of the building in which was my law office, and being then in his glory, he had taken the dog into the bar-room of Mick Raffity, where he had on arrival in town secured a place, to see what chance there might be of making a match with Dix. The match was duly arranged and came off the following night in a resort not far from Raffity's saloon, and Dix won the fight. Just at this moment, however, the police made a raid, pulled the place and arrested as many of the crowd as could not escape, and held on to as many of those as were without requisite influence to secure their prompt discharge. In the course of the operation, Jeams got soundly hammered, though I could not tell whether it was for being drunk or for engaging in a scrimmage with the police. Jeams declared privately that it was to prevent his taking down the money.

When the trial came off, I had prepared myself fully, but I feel confident that nothing would have availed to secure Jeams's acquittal except for two circum-

stances: One was that I succeeded in enlisting the interest of Mr. McSheen, who for some reason of his own showed a disposition to be particularly civil and complacent toward me at that time—so civil indeed that I quite reproached myself for having conceived a dislike of him. Through his intervention, as I learned later, the most damaging witness against my client suddenly became exceedingly friendly to him and on the witness-stand failed to remember any circumstance of importance which could injure him, and finally declared his inability to identify him.

The result was that Jeams was acquitted, and when he was so informed, he arose and made a speech to the Court and the Jury which would certainly fix him in their memory forever. In the course of it, he declared that I was the greatest lawyer that had ever lived in the world, and I had to stop him for fear, in his ebullient enthusiasm, he might add also that Dix was the greatest dog that ever lived.

XXI

THE RESURRECTION OF DIX

Still, I had not got Dix back, and I meant to find him if possible! It was several days before I could get on the trace of him, and when I undertook to get the dog I found an unexpected difficulty in the way. I was sent from one office to another until my patience was almost exhausted, and finally when I thought I had, at last, run him down, I was informed that the dog was dead. The gapped-tooth official, with a pewter badge on his breast as his only insignia of official rank, on my pressing the matter, gave me a circumstantial account of the manner in which the dog came to his death. He had attempted, he said, to get through the gate, and it had slammed to on him accidentally, and, being very heavy, had broken his neck.

I had given Dix up for lost and was in a very low state of mind, in which Jeams sympathized with me deeply, though possibly for a different reason. He declared that we had "lost a dog as could win a ten-dollar bill any day he could get a man to put it up."

"Cap'n, you jes' ought to 'a' seen the way he chawed up that bar-keep Gallagin's dog! I was jes' gittin' ready to rake in de pile when dem perlice jumped in an' hammered me. We done los' dat dog, Cap'n—you an' I got to go to work," he added with a rueful look.

It did look so, indeed. A few days later, a letter from him announced that he had gotten a place and would call on me "before long." As he gave no address, I assumed that his "place" was in some barroom, and I was much disturbed about him. One day, not long after, Dix dashed into my office and nearly ate me up in his joy. I really did not know until he came back how dear he was to me. It was as if he had risen from the dead. I took him up in my arms and hugged him as if I had been a boy. He wore a fine new collar with a monogram on it which I could not decipher. Next day, as I turned into the alley at the back of the building on which opened Mick Raffity's saloon, with a view to running up to my office by the back way, I found Dix in the clutches of a man who was holding on to him, notwithstanding his effort to escape. He was a short, stout fellow with a surly face. At my appearance Dix repeated the manœuvres by which he had escaped from Jeams the day I left him behind me back East, and was soon at my side.

I strode up to the man.

"What are you doing with my dog?" I demanded angrily.

"He's Mr. McSheen's dog."

"He's nothing of the kind. He's my dog and I brought him here with me."

"I guess I know whose dog he is," he said, insolently. "He got him from Dick Gallagin."

Gallagin! That was the name of the man who had put up a dog to fight Dix. A light began to break on me.

"I guess you don't know anything of the kind, unless you know he's mine. He never heard of Gallagin. I brought him here when I came and he was stolen from me not long ago and I've just got him back. Shut up, Dix!" for Dix was beginning to growl and was ready for war.

The fellow mumbled something and satisfied me that he was laboring under a misapprehension, so I explained a little further, and he turned and went into Raffity's saloon. Next day, however, there was a knock at my door, and before I could call to the person to come in, McSheen himself stood in the door. The knock itself was loud and insolent, and McSheen was glowering and manifestly ready for trouble.

"I hear you have a dog here that belongs to me," he began.

"Well, you have heard wrong—I have not."

"Well—to my daughter. It is the same thing."

"No, I haven't—a dog that belongs to your daughter?"

"Yes, a dog that belongs to my daughter. Where is he?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I wasn't aware that you had a daughter, and I have no dog of hers or any one else—except my own."

"Oh! That don't go, young man—trot him out."

At this moment, Dix walked out from under my desk where he had been lying, and standing beside me, gave a low, deep growl.

"Why, that's the dog now."

I was angry, but I was quiet, and I got up and walked over toward him.

"Tell me what you are talking about," I said.

"I'm talking about that dog. My daughter owns him and I've come for him."

"Well, you can't get this dog," I said, "because he's mine."

"Oh! he is, is he?"

"Yes, I brought him here with me when I came. I've had him since he was a puppy."

"Oh! you did!"

"Yes, I did. Go back there, Dix, and lie down!" for Dix, with the hair up on his broad back and a wicked look in his eye, was growling his low, ominous bass that meant war. At the word, however, he went back to his corner and lay down, his eye watchful and uneasy. His prompt obedience seemed to stagger Mr. McSheen, for he condescended to make his first attempt at an explanation.

"Well, a man brought him and sold him to my daughter two months ago."

"I know—he stole him."

"I don't know anything about that. She paid for him fair and square—$50.00, and she's fond of the dog, and I want him."

"I'm sorry, for I can't part with him."

"You'd sell him, I guess?"

"No."

"If I put up enough?"

"No."

"Say, see here." He put his hand in his pocket. "I helped you out about that nigger of yours, and I want the dog. I'll give you $50.00 for the dog—more than he's worth—and that makes one hundred he's cost."

"He's not for sale—I won't sell him."

"Well, I'll make it a hundred." A hundred dollars! The money seemed a fortune to me; but I could not sell Dix.

"No. I tell you the dog is not for sale. I won't sell him."

"What is your price, anyhow?" demanded McSheen. "I tell you I want the dog. I promised my daughter to get the dog back."

"Mr. McSheen, I have told you the dog is not for sale—I will not sell him at any price."

He suddenly flared up.

"Oh! You won't! Well, I'll tell you that I'll have that dog and you'll sell him too."

"I will not."

"We'll see. You think you're a pretty big man, but I'll show you who's bigger in this town—you or Coll McSheen. I helped you once and you haven't sense enough to appreciate it. You look out for me, young man." He turned slowly with his scowling eye on me.

"I will."

"You'd better. When I lay my hand on you, you'll think an earthquake's hit you."

"Well, get out of my office now," I said.

"Oh! I'm going now, but wait."

He walked out, and I was left with the knowledge that I had one powerful enemy.

I was soon to know Mr. Collis McSheen better, as he was also to know me better.

A few days after this I was walking along and about to enter my office when a man accosted me at the entrance and asked if I could tell him of a good lawyer.

I told him I was one myself, though I had the grace to add that there were many more, and I named several of the leading firms in the city.

"Well, I guess you'll do. I was looking for you. You are the one she sent me to," he said doubtfully, when I had told him my name. He was a weather-beaten little Scotchman, very poor and hard up; but there was something in his air that dignified him. He had a definite aim, and a definite wrong to be righted. The story he told me was a pitiful one. He had been in this country several years and had a place in a locomotive-shop somewhere East, and so long as he had had work, had saved money. But they "had been ordered out," he said, and after waiting around finding that the strike had failed, he had come on here and had gotten a place in a boiler-shop, but they "had been ordered out" again, "just as I got my wife and children on and was getting sort of fixed up," he added. Then he had resigned from the union and had got another place, but a man he had had trouble with back East was "one of the big men up here now," and he had had him turned out because he did not "belong to the union." He was willing to join the union now, but "Wringman

had had him turned down." Then he had gotten a place as a driver. But he had been ill and had lost his place, and since then he had not been able to get work, "though the preacher had tried to help him." He did not seem to complain of this loss of his place.

"The wagon had to run," he said, but he and his wife, too, had been ill, and the baby had died and the expenses of the burial had been "something." He appeared to take it as a sort of ultimate decree not to be complained of—only stated. He mentioned it simply by way of explanation, and spoke as if it were a mere matter of Fate. And, indeed, to the poor, sickness often has the finality of Fate. During their illness they had sold nearly all their furniture to live on and pay rent. Now he was in arrears; his wife was in bed, his children sick, and his landlord had levied on his furniture that remained for the rent. At the last gasp he had come to see a lawyer.

"I know I owe the rent," he said, "but the beds won't pay it and the loan company's got all the rest."

I advised him that the property levied on was not subject to levy; but suggested his going to his landlord and laying the case before him.

"If he has any bowels of compassion whatever—" I began, but he interrupted me.

"That's what the preacher said." But his landlord was "the Argand Estate," he added in a hopeless tone. He only knew the agent. He had been to him and so had the preacher; but he said he could do nothing—the rent must be paid—"the Argand Estate had to be kept

up, or it couldn't do all the good it did"—so he was going to turn them out next day.

He had been to one or two lawyers, he said; but they wouldn't take the case against the Argand Estate, and then the lady had sent him to me.

"What lady?"

"The lady who teaches the little school—Miss Leigh—she teaches my Janet."

McNeil's name had at first made no impression on me, but the mention of Miss Leigh, "the Argand Estate," and of Wringman brought up an association. "McNeil?—McNeil?" I said. "Did you have five children; and did your wife bring them on here some months ago—when the train was late, one day?"

"Yes, sorr; that's the way it was."

"Well, I will keep you in longer than to-morrow," I said. And I did. But Justice is too expensive a luxury for the poor. "Law is law," but it was made by landlords. I won his case for him and got his furniture released; I scored the Argand agent, an icy-faced gentleman, named Gillis, "of high character," as the Argand counsel, Mr. McSheen, indignantly declared, and incidentally "the Argand Estate," in terms which made me more reputation than I knew of at the time.

The case was a reasonably simple one, for my client was entitled to a poor debtor's exemption of a few household articles of primary need, and he had not half of what he could have claimed under his exemption. It appeared, however, that in the lease, which was in the

regular form used by the Argand Estate, all exemptions were waived, and also that it was the regular practice of the estate to enforce the waiver, and it was alleged at the trial that this practice had always been sustained. It was the fact that this was the customary lease and that a principle was involved which brought Mr. McSheen into the case, as he stated, for a client who was the largest landlord in the city. And it was the fact that Miss Leigh had recommended me and that McSheen was in the case that made me put forth all my powers on it.

On the stand the Argand agent, Gillis, who, it appeared, had begun as an office-boy in the office of Mr. Argand and had then become his private secretary, from which he had risen to wealth and position, a fact I had learned from Kalender, was foolish enough to say that the case was gotten up by an unknown young lawyer out of spite against the Argand Estate and that it was simply an instance of "the eternal attacks on wealth"; that, in fact, there were "only two sides, the man with the dress-coat and the man without."

"You began poor. When did you change your coat?" I asked.

The laugh was raised on him and he got angry. After that I had the case. I was unknown, but Gillis was better known than I thought, and the hardship on my client was too plain. I led him on into a tangle of admissions, tied him up and cross-examined him till the perspiration ran off his icy forehead. I got the jury and won the case. But, notwithstanding my success,

my client was ruined. He was put out of the house, of course, and though I had saved for him his beds, every article he possessed soon went for food. The laws established for the very protection of the poor destroy their credit and injure them. He could not give security for rent, and but for a fellow-workman named Simms taking him into his house, and the kindness of the man he had spoken of as "the preacher," his children would have had to go to the workhouse or a worse place.

McNeil's case was the beginning of my practice, and in a little while I found myself counsel for many of the drivers in our section of the city.

Among those whom this case brought me in touch with was a young lawyer, who, a little later, became the attorney for the government. My interest in him was quickened by the discovery that he was related to Mr. Leigh, a fact he mentioned somewhat irrelevantly. He was present during the trial and on its conclusion came up and congratulated me on my success against what he termed "the most powerful combination for evil in the city. They bid fair," he said, "to control not only the city, but the State, and are the more dangerous because they are entrenched behind the support of ignorant honesty. But you must look out for McSheen." As he stood near Coll McSheen, I caught the latter's eye fixed on us with that curious malevolent expression which cast a sort of mask over his face.

I had not hunted up John Marvel after learning of his presence in the city, partly because I thought he

would not be congenial and partly because, having left several affectionate letters from him unanswered during my prosperity, I was ashamed to seek him now in my tribulation. But Fate decided for me. We think of our absent friend and lo! a letter from him is handed to us before we have forgotten the circumstance. We fancy that a man in the street is an acquaintance; he comes nearer and we discover our mistake, only to meet the person we thought of, on the next corner. We cross seas and run into our next-door neighbor in a crowded thoroughfare. In fact, the instances of coincidence are so numerous and so strange that one can hardly repel the inference that there is some sort of law governing them.

I indulged in this reflection when, a morning or two later, as I was recalling my carelessness in not looking up John Marvel and Wolffert, there was a tap on the door and a spare, well-built, dark-bearded man, neatly but plainly dressed, walked in. His hat shaded his face, and partly concealed his eyes; but as he smiled and spoke, I recognized him.

"Wolffert! I was just thinking of you."

He looked much older than I expected, and than, I thought, I myself looked; his face was lined and his hair had a few strands of silver at the temples; his eyes were deeper than ever, and he appeared rather worn. But he had developed surprisingly since we had parted at College. His manner was full of energy. In fact, as he talked he almost blazed at times. And I was conscious of a strange kind of power in him that attracted

and carried me along with him, even to the dulling of my judgment. He had been away, he said, and had only just returned, and had heard of my success in "defeating the Argand Estate Combination"; and he had come to congratulate me. It was the first victory any one had ever been able to win against them.

"But I did not defeat any combination," I said. "I only defeated Collis McSheen in his effort to take my client's bed and turn him and his children out in the street without a blanket."

"There is the Combination, all the same," he asserted. "They have the Law and the Gospel both in the combine. They make and administer the one and then preach the other to bind on men's shoulders burdens, grievous to be borne, that they themselves do not touch with so much as a finger."

"But I don't understand," I persisted; for I saw that he labored under much suppressed feeling, and I wondered what had embittered him. "Collis McSheen I know, for I have had some experience of him; and Gillis, the agent, was a cool proposition; but the Argand Estate? Why, McSheen strung out a list of charities that the Argand Estate supported that staggered me. I only could not understand why they support a man like McSheen."

"The Argand Estate support charities! Yes, a score of them—all listed—and every dollar is blood, wrung from the hearts and souls of others—and there are many Argands."

"How do you mean?" For he was showing a sudden passion which I did not understand. He swept on without heeding my question.

"Why, their houses are the worst in the city; their tenements the poorest for the rent charged; their manufactories the greatest sweatshops; their corporate enterprises all at the cost of the working-class, and, to crown it all, they sustain and support the worst villains in this city, who live on the bodies and souls of the ignorant and the wretched."

"Whom do you mean? I don't understand."

"Why, do you suppose the Coll McSheens and Gillises and their kind could subsist unless the Argands and Capons of the Time supported them? They have grown so bold now that they threaten even their social superiors—they must rule alone! They destroy all who do not surrender at discretion."

"Who? How?" I asked, as he paused, evidently following a train of reflection, while his eyes glowed.

"Why, ah! even a man like—Mr. Leigh, who though the product of an erroneous system is, at least, a broad man and a just one."

"Is he? I do not know him. Tell me about him." For I was suddenly interested.

Then he told me of Mr. Leigh and his work in trying to secure better service for the public, better tenements —better conditions generally.

"But they have defeated him," he said bitterly. "They turned him out of his directorship—or, at least, he got out—and are fighting him at every turn.

They will destroy him, if possible. They almost have him beat now. Well, it is nothing to me," he added with a shrug of his shoulders and a sort of denial of the self-made suggestion. "He is but an individual victim of a rotten system that must go."

My mind had drifted to the conference which I had witnessed in McSheen's office not long before, when suddenly Wolffert said,

"Your old friend, Peck, appears to have gotten up. I judge he is very successful—after his kind."

"Yes, it would seem so," I said dryly, with a sudden fleeting across my mind of a scene from the past, in which not Peck figured, but one who now bore his name; and a slightly acrid taste came in my mouth at the recollection. "Well, up or down, he is the same," I added.

"He is a serpent," said Wolffert. "You remember how he tried to make us kill each other?"

"Yes, and what a fool I made of myself."

"No, no. He was at the bottom of it. He used to come and tell me all the things you said and—didn't say. He made a sore spot in my heart and kept it raw. He's still the same—reptile."

"Have you seen him?" I asked. He leaned back and rested his eyes on me.

"Yes, he took the trouble to hunt me up a day or two ago, and for some reason went over the whole thing again. What's McSheen to him?"

"I shall break his neck some day, yet," I observed quietly.

"You know I write," he said explanatorily. "He wanted me to write something about you."

"About me?"

"Yes."

"What a deep-dyed scoundrel he is!"

"Yes, he wanted to enlist me on the McSheen side, but—" his eyes twinkled. "Where do you go to church?" he suddenly asked me.

I told him, and I thought he smiled possibly at what I feared was a little flush in my face.

"To 'St. Mammon's'! Why don't you go to hear John Marvel? He is the real thing."

"John Marvel? Where is he?"

"Not far from where you say you live. He preaches out there—to the poor."

"In a chapel?" I inquired.

"Everywhere where he is," said Wolffert, quietly.

"What sort of a preacher is he?"

"The best on earth, not with words, but with deeds. His life is his best sermon."

I told him frankly why I had not gone, though I was ashamed, for we had grown confidential in our talk. But Wolffert assured me that John Marvel would never think of anything but the happiness of meeting me again.

"He is a friend whom God gives to a man once in his lifetime," he said, as he took his leave. "Cherish such an one. His love surpasseth the love of women."

"Has he improved?" I asked.

A little spark flashed in Wolffert's eyes. "He did not need to improve. He has only ripened. God en-

dowed him with a heart big enough to embrace all humanity—except—" he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "the Jew."

"I do not believe that."

"By the way, I have a friend who tells me she has met you. Your dog appears to have made quite an impression on her."

"Who is she?"

"Miss Leigh, the daughter of the gentleman we were talking about."

"Oh! yes—a fine girl—I think," I said with a casual air—to conceal my real interest.

"I should say so! She is the real thing," he exclaimed. "She told me you put out her fire for her. She teaches the waifs and strays."

"Put out her fire! Was ever such ingratitude! I made her fire for her. Tell me what she said."

But Wolffert was gone, with a smile on his face.

XXII

THE PREACHER

So, "the preacher" whom my client, McNeil, and my poor neighbors talked of was no other than John Marvel! I felt that he must have changed a good deal since I knew him. But decency, as well as curiosity, required that I go to see him. Accordingly, although I had of late gone to church only to see a certain worshipper, I one evening sauntered over toward the little rusty-looking chapel, where I understood he preached. To my surprise, the chapel was quite full, and to my far greater surprise, old John proved to be an inspiring preacher. Like Wolffert, he had developed. When he came to preach, though the sermon was mainly hortatory and what I should have expected of him, his earnestness and directness held his congregation, and I must say he was far more impressive than I should have imagined he could be. His sermon was as far from the cut-and-dried discourse I was used to hear, as life is from death.

He spoke without notes and directly from his heart. His text, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden." He made it out to be a positive promise of rest for the weary in body, mind and soul, given by One not only able to help, but longing to do so: a pitying Father, who saw His tired children struggling

under their burdens and yearned toward them. The great Physician was reaching out His hands to them, longing to heal them, if they but received Him; if they but followed Him. To be converted meant to turn from what they knew to be evil and try to live as they felt He lived. He had come to bring the gospel to the poor. He had been poor—as poor as they. He knew their sorrows and privations and weakness; and their sins, however black they were. All He asked was that they trust Him, and try to follow Him, forgetting self and helping others. Do not be afraid to trust Him, or despair if He does not make Himself known to you. He is with you even until the end—and often as much when you do not feel it as when you do.

God appeared very real to him, and also to his hearers, who hung on his words as simple as they were. I felt a seriousness which I had long been a stranger to. He appeared to be talking to me, and I set it down to tenderness for old John Marvel himself, rather than to his subject.

When the service was over, he came down the aisle speaking to the congregation, many of whom he appeared to know by name, and whose concerns he also knew intimately. And as the children crowded around him with smiles of friendliness, I thought of the village preacher with the children following, "with endearing wile."

His words were always words of cheer.

"Ah! Mrs. Tams! Your boy got his place, didn't he?

"Mrs. Williams, your little girl is all right again?

"Well, Mrs. McNeil" (to a rusty, thinly clad woman who sat with her back to me), "so your husband won his case, after all? His lawyer was an old friend of mine."

I had sat far back, as the church was full when I entered, and was waiting for him to get through with his congregation before making myself known to him; so, though he was now quite close to me, he did not recognize me until I spoke to him. As I mentioned his name, he turned.

"Why, Henry Glave!" Then he took me in his arms, bodily, and lifting me from the ground hugged me there before the entire remnant of his congregation who yet remained in the church. I never had a warmer greeting. I felt as if I were the prodigal son, and, although it was embarrassing, I was conscious that instant that he had lifted me out of my old life and taken me to his heart. It was as if he had set me down on a higher level in a better and purer atmosphere.

I went home with him that night to his little room in a house even smaller and poorer than that in which I had my room—where he lived, as I found, because he knew the pittance he paid was a boon to the poor family who sublet the room. But as small and inconvenient as the room was, I felt that it was a haven for a tired and storm-tossed spirit, and the few books it contained gave it an air of being a home. Before I left it I was conscious that I was in a new phase of life. Something made me feel that John Marvel's room was not only a home but a sanctuary.

We sat late that night and talked of many things, and

though old John had not improved in quickness, I was surprised, when I came to think over our evening, how much he knew of people—poor people. It seemed to me that he lived nearer to them than possibly any one I had known. He had organized a sort of settlement among them, and his chief helpers were Wolffert and a Catholic priest, a dear devoted old fellow, Father Tapp, whom I afterward met, who always spoke of John Marvel as his "Heretick brother," and never without a smile in his eye. Here he helped the poor, the sick and the outcast; got places for those out of work, and encouraged those who were despairing. I discovered that he was really trying to put into practical execution the lessons he taught out of the Bible, and though I told him he would soon come to grief doing that, he said he thought the command was too plain to be disobeyed. Did I suppose that the Master would have commanded, "Love your enemies," and, "Turn the other cheek," if He had not meant it? "Well," I said, "the Church goes for teaching that theoretically, I admit; but it does not do it in practice—I know of no body of men more ready to assert their rights, and which strikes back with more vehemence when assailed."

"Ah! but that is the weakness of poor, fallible, weak man," he sighed. "'We know the good, but oft the ill pursue;' if we could but live up to our ideals, then, indeed, we might have Christ's kingdom to come. Suppose we could get all to obey the injunction, 'Sell all thou hast and give to the poor,' what a world we should have!"

"It would be filled with paupers and dead beats," I declared, scouting the idea. "Enterprise would cease, a dead stagnation would result, and the industrious and thrifty would be the prey of the worthless and the idle."

"Not if all men could attain the ideal."

"No, but there is just the rub; they cannot—you leave out human nature. Selfishness is ingrained in man—it has been the mainspring which has driven the race to advance."

He shook his head. "The grace of God is sufficient for all," he said. "The mother-love has some part in the advance made, and that is not selfish. Thank God! There are many rich noble men and women, who are not selfish and who do God's service on earth out of sheer loving kindness, spend their money and themselves in His work."

"No doubt, but here in this city?——"

"Yes, in this city—thousands of them. Why, where do we get the money from to run our place with?"

"From the Argand Estate?" I hazarded.

"Yes, even from the Argand Estate we get some. But men like Mr. Leigh are those who support us and women like—ah— But beyond all those who give money are those who give themselves. They bring the spiritual blessing of their presence, and teach the true lesson of divine sympathy. One such person is worth many who only give money."

"Who, for instance?"

"Why—ah—Miss Leigh—for example."

I could scarcely believe my senses. Miss Leigh! "Do you know Miss Leigh? What Miss Leigh are you speaking of?" I hurriedly asked to cover my own confusion, for John had grown red and I knew instinctively that it was she—there could be but one.

"Miss Eleanor Leigh—yes, I know her—she—ah—teaches in my Sunday-school." John's old trick of stammering had come back.

Teaching in his Sunday-school! And I not know her! That instant John secured a new teacher. But he went on quickly, not divining the joy in my heart, or the pious resolve I was forming. "She is one of the good people who holds her wealth as a trust for the Master's poor—she comes over every Sunday afternoon all the way from her home and teaches a class."

Next Sunday at three P. M. a hypocrite of my name sat on a bench in John's little church, pretending to teach nine little ruffians whose only concern was their shoes which they continually measured with each other, while out of the corner of my eye I watched a slender figure bending, with what I thought wonderful grace, over a pew full of little girls on the other side of the church intent on their curls or bangs.

The lesson brought in that bald-headed and somewhat unfeeling prophet, who called forth from the wood the savage and voracious she-bears to devour the crowd of children who ran after him and made rude observations on his personal appearance, and before I was through, my sympathies had largely shifted from the unfortunate youngsters to the victim of their annoy-

ance. Still I made up my mind to stick if John would let me, and the slim and flower-like teacher of the fidgety class across the aisle continued to attend.

I dismissed my class rather abruptly, I fear, on observing that the little girls had suddenly risen and were following their teacher toward the door with almost as much eagerness as I felt to escort her. When I discovered that she was only going to unite them with another class, it was too late to recall my pupils, who at the first opportunity had made for the door, almost as swiftly as though the she-bears were after them.

When the Sunday-school broke up, the young lady waited around, and I took pains to go up and speak to her, and received a very gracious smile and word of appreciation at my efforts with the "Botany Bay Class," as my boys were termed, which quite rewarded me for my work. Her eyes, with their pleasant light, lit up the whole place for me. Just then John Marvel came out—and it was the first time I ever regretted his appearance. The smile she gave him and the cordiality of her manner filled me with sudden and unreasoning jealousy. It was evident that she had waited to see him, and old John's face bore a look of such happiness that he almost looked handsome. As for her—as I came out I felt quite dazed. On the street whom should I meet but Wolffert—"simply passing by," but when I asked him to take a walk, he muttered something about having "to see John." He was well dressed and looked unusually handsome. Yet when John appeared, still talking earnestly with Miss Leigh, I instantly saw

by his face and the direction of his eye that the John he wanted to see wore an adorable hat and a quiet, but dainty tailor-made suit and had a face as lovely as a rose.

I was in such a humor that I flung off down the street, swearing that every man I knew was in love with her, and it was not until ten o'clock that night, when I went to John's—whither I was drawn by an irresistible desire to talk about her and find out how matters stood between them—and he told me that she had asked where I had gone, that I got over my temper.

"Why, what made you run off so?" he inquired.

"When?" I knew perfectly what he meant.

"Immediately after we let out."

"My dear fellow, I was through, and besides I thought you had pleasanter company." I said this with my eyes on his face to see him suddenly redden. But he answered with a naturalness which put me to shame.

"Yes, Miss Leigh has been trying to get a place for a poor man—your client by the way—and then she was talking to me about a little entertainment for the children and their parents, too. She is always trying to do something for them. And she was sorry not to get a chance to speak further to you. She said you had helped her about her fire and she had never thanked you."

It is surprising how quickly the sun can burst from the thickest clouds for a man in love. I suddenly wondered that Miss Leigh among her good works did not continually ask about me and send me messages. It made me so happy.

"What became of Wolffert?" I inquired.

"I think he walked home with her. He had something to talk with her about. They are great friends, you know. She helps Wolffert in his work."

"Bang!" went the clouds together again like a clap of thunder. The idea of Wolffert being in love with her! I could tolerate the thought of John Marvel being so, but Wolffert was such a handsome fellow, so clever and attractive, and so full of enthusiasm. It would never do. Why, she might easily enough imagine herself in love with him. I suddenly wondered if Wolffert was not the cause of her interest in settlement work.

"Wolffert is very fond of her—I found him hanging around the door as we came out," I hazarded.

"Oh! yes, they are great friends. He is an inspiration to her, she says—and Wolffert thinks she is an angel—as she is. Why, if you knew the things she does and makes others do!"

If John Marvel had known with what a red-hot iron he was searing my heart, he would have desisted; but good, blind soul, he was on his hobby and he went on at full speed, telling me what good deeds she had performed—how she had fetched him to the city; and how she had built up his church for him—had started and run his school for the waifs—coming over from her beautiful home in all weathers to make up the fire herself and have the place warm and comfortable for the little ones—how she looked after the sick—organized charities for them and spent her money in their behalf.

"They call her the angel of the lost children," he said, "and well they may."

"Who does?" I asked suspiciously, recalling the title. "Wolffert, I suppose?"

"Why, all my people—I think Wolffert first christened her so and they have taken it up."

"Confound Wolffert!" I thought. "Wolffert's in love with her," I said.

"Wolffert—in love with her! Why!" I saw that I had suggested the idea for the first time—but it had found a lodgment in his mind. "Oh! no, he is not," he declared, but rather arguing than asserting it. "They are only great friends—they work together and have many things in common—Wolffert will never marry—he is wedded to his ideal."

"And her name is Eleanor Leigh—only he is not wedded to her yet." And I added in my heart, "He will never be if I can beat him."

"Yes—certainly, in a way—as she is mine," said John, still thinking.

"And you are too!" I said.

"I? In love with—?" He did not mention her name. It may have been that he felt it too sacred. But he gave a sort of gasp. "The glow-worm may worship the star, but it is at a long distance, and it knows that it can never reach it."

I hope it may be forgiven to lovers not to have been frank with their rivals. His humility touched me. I wanted to tell John that I thought he might stand a chance, but I was not unselfish enough, as he would

have been in my place. All I was brave enough to do was to say, "John, you are far above the glow-worm; you give far more light than you know, and the star knows and appreciates it."

XXIII

MRS. ARGAND

I now began to plan how I was to meet my young lady on neutral and equal ground, for meet her I must. When I first met her I could have boldly introduced myself, for all my smutted face; now Love made me modest. When I met her, I scarcely dared to look into her eyes; I began to think of the letters of introduction I had, which I had thrown into my trunk. One of them was to Mrs. Argand, a lady whom I assumed to be the same lofty person I had seen mentioned in the papers as one of the leaders among the fashionable set, and also as one of the leaders in all public charitable work. It had, indeed, occurred to me to associate her vaguely, first with the private-car episode, and then with my poor client's landlord, the Argand Estate; but the "Argand Estate" appeared a wholly impersonal machine of steel; her reputation in the newspapers for charity disposed of this idea. Indeed, Wolffert had said that there were many Mrs. Argands in the city, and there were many Argands in the directory.

I presented my letter and was invited to call on a certain day, some two weeks later. She lived in great style, in a ponderous mansion of unhewn stone piled up with prison-like massiveness, surrounded by exten-

sive grounds, filled with carefully tended, formal flower-beds. A ponderous servant asked my name and, with eyes on vacancy, announced me loudly as "Mr. Glaze." The hostess was well surrounded by callers. I recognized her the instant I entered as the large lady of the private car. Both she and her jewels were the same. Also I knew instantly that she was the "Argand Estate," which I had scored so, and I was grateful to the servant for miscalling my name. Her sumptuous drawing-rooms were sprinkled with a handsomely dressed company who sailed in, smiled around, sat on the edge of chairs, chattered for some moments, grew pensive, uttered a few sentences, spread their wings, and sailed out with monotonous regularity and the solemn air of a duty performed. There was no conversation with the hostess—only, as I observed from my coign of vantage, an exchange of compliments and flattery.

Most of the callers appeared either to be very intimate or not to know each other at all, and when they could not gain the ear of the hostess, they simply sat stiffly in their chairs and looked straight before them, or walked around and inspected the splendid bric-à-brac with something of an air of appraisement.

I became so interested that, being unobserved myself, I stayed some time observing them. I also had a vague hope that possibly Miss Leigh might appear. It was owing to my long visit that I was finally honored with my hostess's attention. As she had taken no notice of me on my first entrance beyond a formal bow and an indifferent hand-shake, I had moved on and a moment

later had gotten into conversation with a young girl—large, plump, and apparently, like myself, ready to talk to any one who came near, as she promptly opened a conversation with me, a step which, I may say, I was more than ready to take advantage of. I recognized her as the girl who had been talking to Count Pushkin the evening of the concert, and whom I had seen him leave for Miss Leigh. We were soon in the midst of a conversation in which I did the questioning and she did most of the talking and she threw considerable light on a number of the visitors, whom she divided into various classes characterized in a vernacular of her own. Some were "frumps," some were "stiffs," and some were "old soaks"—the latter appellation, as I gathered, not implying any special addiction to spirituous liquors on the part of those so characterized, but only indicating the young woman's gauge of their merits. Still, she was amusing enough for a time, and appeared to be always ready to "die laughing" over everything. Like myself, she seemed rather inclined to keep her eye on the door, where I was watching for the possible appearance of the one who had brought me there. I was recalled from a slight straying of my mind from some story she was telling, by her saying:

"You're a lawyer, aren't you?"

Feeling rather flattered at the suggestion, and thinking that I must have struck her as intellectual-looking, I admitted the fact and asked her why she thought so.

"Oh! because they're the only people who have

nothing to do and attend teas—young lawyers. I have seen you walking on the street when I was driving by."

"Well, you know you looked busier than I; but you weren't really," I said. I was a little taken aback by her asking if I knew Count Pushkin.

"Oh, yes," I said. "I know him."

This manifestly made an impression.

"What do you think of him?"

"What do I think of him? When I know you a little better, I will tell you," I said. "Doesn't he attend teas?"

"Oh! yes, but then he is—he is something—a nobleman, you know."

"Do I?"

"Yes. Didn't you hear how last spring he stopped a runaway and was knocked down and dragged ever so far? Why, his face was all bruises."

I could not help laughing at the recollection of Pushkin.

"I saw that."

"Oh! did you? Do tell me about it. It was fine, wasn't it? Don't you think he's lovely?"

"Get him to tell you about it." I was relieved at that moment at a chance to escape her. I saw my hostess talking to a middle-aged, overdressed, but handsome woman whose face somehow haunted me with a reminiscence which I could not quite place, and as I happened to look in a mirror I saw they were talking of me, so I bowed to my young lady and moved on. The visitor asked who I was, and I could see the hostess reply that she had not the slightest idea. She put

up her lorgnon and scrutinized me attentively and then shook her head again. I walked over to where they sat.

"We were just saying, Mr.—ah—ah—Laze, that one who undertakes to do a little for one's fellow-beings finds very little encouragement." She spoke almost plaintively, looking first at me and then at her friend, who had been taking an inventory of the west side of the room and had not the slightest idea of what she was talking.

"I am overrun with beggars," she proceeded.

Remembering her great reputation for charity, I thought this natural and suggested as much. She was pleased with my sympathy, and continued:

"Why, they invade me even in the privacy of my home. Not long ago, a person called and, though I had given instructions to my butler to deny me to persons, unless he knew their business and I know them, this man, who was a preacher and should have known better, pushed himself in and actually got into my drawing-room when I was receiving some of my friends. As he saw me, of course I could not excuse myself, and do you know, he had the insolence, not only to dictate to me how I should spend my money, but actually how I should manage my affairs!"

"Oh! dear, think of that!" sighed the other lady. "And you, of all people!"

I admitted that this was extraordinary, and, manifestly encouraged, Mrs. Argand swept on.

"Why, he actually wanted me to forego my rents and let a person stay in one of my houses who would not pay his rent!"

"Incredible!"

"The man had had the insolence to hold on and actually force me to bring suit."

"Impossible!"

I began to wish I were back in my office. At this moment, however, succor came from an unexpected source.

"You know we have bought a house very near you?" interjected the blonde girl who had joined our group and suddenly broke in on our hostess's monologue.

"Ah! I should think you would feel rather lonely up here—and would miss all your old friends?" said Mrs. Argand sweetly, turning her eyes toward the door. The girl lifted her head and turned to the other lady.

"Not at all. You know lots of people call at big houses, Mrs. Gillis, just because they are big," said she, with a spark in her pale-blue eye, and I felt she was able to take care of herself.

But Mrs. Argand did not appear to hear. She was looking over the heads of the rest of us with her eye on the door, when suddenly, as her servant in an unintelligible voice announced some one, her face lit up.

"Ah! My dear Count! How do you do? It was so good of you to come."

I turned to look just as Pushkin brushed by me and, with a little rush between the ladies seated near me, bent over and seizing her hand, kissed it zealously, while he uttered his compliments. It manifestly made

a deep impression on the company. I was sure he had seen me. The effect on the company was remarkable. The blonde girl moved around a little and stood in front of another lady who pressed slightly forward.

"Count Pushkin!" muttered one lady to Mrs. Gillis, in an audible undertone.

"Oh! I know him well." She was evidently trying to catch the count's eye to prove her intimate acquaintance; but Pushkin was too much engrossed with or by our hostess to see her—or else was too busy evading my eye.

"Well, it's all up with me," I thought. "If I leave him here, my character's gone forever."

"Such a beautiful custom," murmured Mrs. Gillis's friend. "I always like it."

"Now, do sit down and have a cup of tea," said our hostess. "I will make you a fresh cup." She glanced at a chair across the room and then at me, and I almost thought she was going to ask me to bring the chair for the count! But she thought better of it.

"Go and bring that chair and sit right here by me and let me know how you are."

"Here, take this seat," said Mrs. Gillis, who was rising, but whose eyes were fast on Pushkin's face.

"Oh! must you be going?" asked Mrs. Argand. "Well, good-by—so glad you could come."

"Yes, I must go. How do you do, Count Pushkin?"

"Oh! ah! How do you do?" said the count, turning with a start and a short bow.

"I met you at the ball not long ago. Miss McSheen

introduced me to you. Don't you remember?" She glanced at the young lady who stood waiting.

"Ah! Yes—certainly! To be sure—Miss McSheen —ah! yes, I remember."

Doubtless, he did; for at this juncture the young lady I had been talking to, stepped forward and claimed the attention of the count, who, I thought, looked a trifle bored.

Feeling as if I were a mouse in a trap, I was about to try to escape when my intention was changed as suddenly as by a miracle, and, indeed, Eleanor Leigh's appearance at this moment seemed almost, if not quite, miraculous.

She had been walking rapidly in the wind and her hair was a little blown about—not too much—for I hate frowsy hair—just enough to give precisely the right touch of "sweet neglect" and naturalness to a pretty and attractive girl. Her cheeks were glowing, her eyes sparkling, her face lighted with some resolution which made it at once audacious and earnest, and as she came tripping into the room she suddenly transformed it by giving it something of reality which it had hitherto lacked. She appeared like spring coming after winter. She hurried up to her aunt (who, I must say, looked pleased to see her and gave Pushkin an arch glance which I did not fail to detect), and then, after a dutiful and hasty kiss, she pulled up a chair and dashed into the middle of the subject which filled her mind. She was so eager about it that she did not pay the least attention to Pushkin, who, with his heels close

together, and his back almost turned on the other girl, who was rattling on at his ear, was bowing and grinning like a Japanese toy; and she did not even see me, where I stood a little retired.

"My dear, here is Count Pushkin trying to speak to you," said her aunt. "Come here, Miss McSheen, and tell me what you have been doing." She smiled at the blonde girl and indicated a vacated chair.

But Miss McSheen saw the trap—she had no idea of relinquishing her prize, and Miss Leigh did not choose to try for a capture.

"Howdydo, Count Pushkin," she said over her shoulder, giving the smiling and bowing Pushkin only half a nod and less than half a glance. "Oh! aunt," she proceeded, "I have such a favor to ask you. Oh, it's a most worthy object, I assure you—really worthy."

"How much is it?" inquired the older lady casually.

"I don't know yet. But wait—you must let me tell you about it, and you will see how good it is."

"My dear, I haven't a cent to give to anything," said her aunt. "I am quite strapped."

"I know, it's the family disease," said the girl lightly, and hurried on. "I am trying to do some work among the poor."

"The poor!" exclaimed her aunt. "My dear, I am so tired of hearing about the poor, I don't know what to do. I am one of the poor myself. My agent was here this morning and tells me that any number of my tenants are behind on their rents and several of my best tenants have given notice that on the expiration of

their present terms, they want a reduction of their rents."

"I know," said the girl. "They are out of work. They are all ordered out, or soon will be, papa says, poor things! I have been to-day to see a poor family——"

"Out of work! Of course they are out of work! They *won't* work, that's why they are out—and now they are talking of a general strike! As if they hadn't had strikes enough. I shall cut down my charities; that's what I shall do."

"Oh! aunt, don't do that!" exclaimed the girl. "They are so poor. If you could see a poor family I saw this morning. Why, they have nothing—nothing! They are literally starving."

"Well, they have themselves to thank, if they are." She was now addressing the count, and two or three ladies seated near her on the edge of their chairs.

"Very true!" sighed one of the latter.

"I know," said the count. "I haf read it in th' papers to-day t'at t'ey vill what you call strike. T'ey should be—vhat you call, put down."

"Of course they should. It almost makes one despair of mankind," chimed in Mrs. Gillis, who, though standing, could not tear herself away. As she stood buttoning at a glove, I suddenly recalled her standing at the foot of a flight of steps looking with cold eyes at a child's funeral.

"Yes, their ingratitude! It does, indeed," said Mrs. Argand. "My agent—ah! your husband—says I shall

have to make repairs that will take up every bit of the rents of any number of my houses—and two of my largest warehouses. I have to repair them, of course. And then if this strike really comes, why, he says it will cost our city lines alone—oh! I don't know how much money. But I hate to talk about money. It is so sordid!" She sat back in her chair.

"Yes, indeed," assented the bejewelled lady she addressed. "I don't even like to think about it. I would like just to be able to draw my cheque for whatever I want and never hear the word *money*—like you, Mrs. Argand. But one can't do it," she sighed. "Why, my mail——"

"Why don't you do as I do?" demanded Mrs. Argand, who had no idea of having the conversation taken away from her in her own house. "My secretary opens all those letters and destroys them. I consider it a great impertinence for any one whom I don't know to write to me, and, of course, I don't acknowledge those letters. My agent——"

"My dear, we must go," said the lady nearest her to her companion. As the two ladies swept out they stopped near me to look at a picture, and one of them said to the other:

"Did you ever hear a more arrogant display in all your life? Her secretary! Her interest—her duties! As if we didn't all have them!"

"Yes, indeed. And her agent! That's my husband!"

"But I do think she was right about that man's pushing in——"

"Oh! yes, about that—she was, but she need not be parading her money before us. My husband made it for old Argand."

"My husband says the Argand Estate is vilely run, that they have the worst tenements in the city and charge the highest rents."

"Do you know that my husband is her—agent?"

"Is he? Why, to be sure; but of course, she is responsible."

"Yes, she's the cause of it."

"And they pay more for their franchises than any one else. Why, my husband says that Coll McSheen, who is the lawyer of the Argand Estate, is the greatest briber in this city. I suppose he'll be buying a count next. I don't see how your husband stands him. He's so refined—such a——"

"Well, they have to have business dealings together, you know."

"Yes. They say he just owns the council, and now he's to be mayor."

"I know."

"Did you see that article in the paper about him and his methods, charging that he was untrue to every one in town, even the Canters and Argands who employed him?"

"Oh, didn't I? I tell my husband he'd better be sure which side to take. One reason I came to-day was to see how she took it."

"So did I," said her friend. "They say the first paper was written by a Jew. It was a scathing indict-

ment. It charged him with making a breach between Mr. Leigh and Mrs. Argand, and now with trying to ruin Mr. Leigh."

"And it was written by a Jew? Was it, indeed? I should like to meet him, shouldn't you? But, of course, we couldn't invite him to our homes. Do you know anybody who might invite him to lunch and ask us to meet him? It would be so interesting to hear him talk."

So they passed out, and I went up to make my adieux to our hostess, secretly intending to remain longer if I could get a chance to talk to her niece, who was now presenting her petition to her, while the count, with his eye on her while he pretended to listen to Miss McSheen, stood by waiting like a cat at a mousehole.

As I approached, Miss Leigh glanced up, and I flattered myself for weeks that it was not only surprise, but pleasure, that lighted up her face.

"Why, how do you do?" she said, and I extended my hand, feeling as shy as I ever did in my life, but as though paradise were somewhere close at hand.

"Where did you two know each other?" demanded her aunt, suspiciously, and I saw Pushkin's face darken, even while the blonde girl rattled on at his ear.

"Why, this is the gentleman who had the poor children on the train that day last spring. They are the same children I have been telling you about."

"Yes, but I did not know you had ever really met."

"That was not the only time I have had the good fortune to meet Miss Leigh," I said. I wanted to add

that I hoped to have yet better fortune hereafter; but I did not.

Perhaps, it was to save me embarrassment that Miss Leigh said: "Mr. Glave and I teach in the same Sunday-school."

"Yes, about the she-bears," I hazarded, thinking of one at the moment.

Miss Leigh laughed. "I have been trying to help your little friends since; I am glad the she-bears did not devour them; I think they are in much more danger from the wolf at the door; in fact, it was about them that I came to see my aunt to-day."

I cursed my folly for not having carried out my intention of going to look after them, and registered a vow to go often thereafter.

"I was so glad you won their case for them," she said in an undertone, moving over toward me, as several new visitors entered. A warm thrill ran all through my veins. "But how did you manage to get here?" she asked with twinkling eyes. "Does she know, or has she forgiven you?"

"She doesn't know—at least, I haven't told her."

"Well, I should like to be by—that is, in a balcony —when she finds out who you are."

"Do you think I was very—bold to come?"

"Bold! Well, wait till she discovers who you are, Richard Cœur de Leon."

"Not I—you see that door? Well, you just watch me. I came for a particular reason that made me think it best to come—and a very good one,"

I added, and glanced at her and found her still smiling.

"What was it?" She looked me full in the face.

"I will tell you some time——"

"No, now."

"No, next Sunday afternoon, if you will let me walk home with you after you have explained the she-bears."

She nodded "All right," and I rose up into the blue sky. I almost thought I had wings.

"My aunt is really a kind woman—I can do almost anything with her."

"Do you think that proves it?" I said. I wanted to say that I was that sort of a kind person myself, but I did not dare.

"My father says she has a foible—she thinks she is a wonderful business woman, because she can run up a column of figures correctly, and that she makes a great to-do over small things, and lets the big ones go. She would not take his advice; so he gave up trying to advise her and she relies on two men who flatter and deceive her."

"Yes."

"I don't see how she can keep those two men, McSheen and Gillis, as her counsel and agent. But I suppose she found them there and does not like to change. My father says——"

Just then Mrs. Argand, after a long scrutiny of us through her lorgnon, said rather sharply:

"Eleanor!"

Miss Leigh turned hastily and plunged into a sentence.

"Aunt, you do not know how much good the little chapel you helped out in the East Side does. Mr. Mar—the preacher there gets places for poor people that are out of employment, and——"

"I suppose he does, but save me from these preachers! Why, one of them came here the other day and would not be refused. He actually forced himself into my house. He had a poor family or something, he said, and he wanted me to undertake to support them. And when I came to find out, they were some of my own tenants who had positively refused to pay any rent, and had held on for months to one of my houses without paying me a penny." She had evidently forgotten that she had just said this a moment before. "I happened to remember," she added, "because my agent told me the man's name, O'Neil."

"McNeil!" exclaimed Miss Leigh. "Why, that is the name of my poor family!" She cut her eye over toward me with a quizzical sparkle in it.

"What! Well, you need not come to me about that man. My counsel said he was one of the worst characters he knew; a regular anarchist—one of these Irish—you know! And when I afterward tried to collect my rents, he got some upstart creature of a lawyer to try and defeat me, and actually did defraud me of my debt."

This was a centre shot for me, and I wondered what she would think if she ever found out who the upstart was. The perspiration began to start on my forehead. It was clear that I must get away. She was, however,

in such a full sweep that I could not get in a word to say good-by.

"But I soon gave Mr. Marble, or whatever his name was, a very different idea of the way he should behave when he came to see a lady. I let him know that I preferred to manage my affairs and select my own objects of charity, without being dictated to by any one, and that I did not propose to help anarchists. And I soon gave Mr. McNeil to understand whom he had to deal with. I ordered him turned out at once—instantly." She was now addressing me.

She was so well satisfied with her position that I must have looked astonished, and I had not at first a word to say. This she took for acquiescence.

"That was, perhaps, the greatest piece of insolence I ever knew!" she continued. "Don't you think so?"

"Well, no, I do not," I said bluntly.

For a moment or so her face was a perfect blank, then it was filled with amazement. Her whole person changed. Her head went up—her eyes flashed, her color deepened.

"Oh!" she said. "Perhaps, we look at the matter from different standpoints?" rearing back more stiffly than ever.

"Unquestionably, madam. I happen to know John Marvel, the gentleman who called on you, very well, and I know him to be one of the best men in the world. I know that he supported that poor family out of his own small income, and when they were turned out of their house, fed them until he could get the father some

"Perhaps you are the man yourself?" she added insolently.

work to do. He was not an anarchist, but a hard-working Scotchman, who had been ill and had lost his place."

"Oh!" she said—this time with renewed superciliousness, raising her lorgnon to observe some new-comers.

"Perhaps, you happen also to know McNeil's counsel—perhaps, you are the man yourself?" she added insolently.

I bowed low. "I am."

The truth swept over her like a flood. Before she recovered, I bowed my adieux, of which, so far as I could see, she took no notice. She turned to Pushkin, as Miss Leigh, from behind a high-backed chair, held out her hand to me. "Well, poor McNeil's done for now," she said in an undertone. But as the latter smiled in my eyes, I did not care what her aunt said.

"Ah! my dear Count, here is the tea at last," I heard our hostess say, and then she added solicitously, "I have not seen you for so long. Why have you denied yourself to your friends? You have quite gotten over your accident of the spring? I read about it in the papers at the time. Such a noble thing to have stopped those horses. You must tell me about it. How did it happen?"

I could not help turning to give Pushkin one look, and he hesitated and stammered. I came out filled with a new sense of what was meant by the curses against the Pharisees. As I was walking along I ran into Wolffert.

"Ah! You are the very man," he exclaimed. "It

is Providence! I was just thinking of you, and you ran into my arms. It is Fate."

It did seem so. Mrs. Argand and her "dear count" had sickened me. Here, at least, was sincerity. But I wondered if he knew that Miss Leigh was within there.

XXIV

WOLFFERT'S MISSION

Wolffert naturally was somewhat surprised to see me come sallying forth from Mrs. Argand's; for he knew what I had not known when I called there, that she was the real owner of "The Argand Estate."

I gave him an account of my interview with the lady.

"I was wondering," he said, laughing, "what you were doing in there after having beaten her in that suit. I thought you had taken your nerve with you. I was afraid you had fallen a victim to her blandishments."

"To whose?"

"Mrs. Argand's. She is the true Circe of the time, and her enchantment is one that only the strong can resist. She reaches men through their bellies."

"Oh!" I was thinking of quite another person, who alone could beguile me, and I was glad that he was not looking at me.

He was, however, too full of another subject to notice me, and as we walked along, I told him of the old lady's views about John Marvel. He suddenly launched out against her with a passion which I was scarcely prepared for, as much as I knew he loved John Marvel. Turning, he pointed fiercely back at the great prison-like mansion.

"Do you see that big house?" His long finger shook slightly—an index of his feeling.

"Yes."

"Every stone in it is laid in mortar cemented with the tears of widows and orphans, and the blood of countless victims of greed and oppression."

"Oh! nonsense! I have no brief for that old woman. I think she is an ignorant, arrogant, purse-proud, ill-bred old creature, spoiled by her wealth and the adulation that it has brought her from a society of sycophants and parasites; but I do not believe that at heart she is bad." She had had a good advocate defend her to me and I was quoting her. Wolffert was unappeased.

"That is it. She sets up to be the paragon of Generosity, the patron of Charity, the example of Kindness for all to follow. She never gave a cent in her life—but only a portion—a small portion of the money wrung from the hearts of others. Her fortune was laid in corruption. Her old husband—I knew him!—he robbed every one, even his partners. He defrauded his benefactor, Colonel Tipps, who made him, and robbed his heirs of their inheritance."

"How?" For I was much interested now.

"By buying up their counsel, and inducing him to sell them out and making him his counsel. And now that old woman keeps him as her counsel and adviser, though he is the worst man in this city, guilty of every crime on the statute-books, sacred and profane."

"But she does not know that?"

"Not know it? Why doesn't she know it? Because she shuts her doors to the men who do know it, and her ears to the cries of his victims. Doesn't every one who cares to look into the crimes in this city know that Coll McSheen is the protector of Vice, and that he could not exist a day if the so-called good people got up and determined to abolish him—that he is the owner of the vilest houses in this city—the vilest because they are not so openly vile as some others? Isn't she trying to sell her niece to an adventurer for a title, or a reprobate for his money?"

"Is she?" My blood suddenly began to boil, and I began to get a new insight into Wolffert's hostility.

We had turned toward John Marvel's. He appeared a sort of landmark to which to turn as we were dealing with serious subjects, and Wolffert was on his way there when I encountered him. As we walked along, he disclosed a system of vice so widespread, so horrible and so repulsive that I hesitate to set it down. He declared that it extended over not only all the great cities of the country, but over all the great cities of all countries.

I related the story the poor girl I had met that night on the street had told me, but I frankly asserted that I did not believe that it could be as general as he claimed.

"'Smooth Ally,' was it?" said Wolffert, who knew of her. "She is the smoothest and worst of them all, and she is protected by McSheen, who in turn is protected by clients like The Argand Estate. What became of her?" he demanded.

"Why, I don't know. I turned her over to the Salvationists—and—and I—rather left her to them."

I was beginning to feel somewhat meek under his scornful expression.

"That is always the way," he said. "We look after them for an hour and then drop them back into perdition."

"But I placed her in good hands. That is their business."

"Their business! Why is it not your business, too? How can you shift the responsibility? It is every one's business. Listen!" He had been recently to southern Russia, where, he said, the system of scoundrelism he described had one of its prolific sources, and he gave figures of the numbers of victims—girls of his own race—gathered up throughout the provinces and shipped from Odessa and other ports, to other countries, including America, to startle one.

"Time was when not a Jewess was to be found on the streets; but now!" He threw out his hand with a gesture of rage, and went on. He averred that many steamship officials combined to connive at the traffic, and that the criminals were shielded by powerful friends who were paid for their protection.

"Why, there are in this city to-night," he declared, "literally thousands of women who have, without any fault of theirs, but ignorance, vanity, and credulity, been drawn into and condemned to a life of vice and misery such as the mind staggers to believe."

"At least, if they are, they are in the main willing

victims," I argued. "There may be a few instances like the girl I saw, but for the most part they have done it of their own volition."

Wolffert turned on me with fire flaming in his deep eyes. "Of their own volition! What is their volition? In fact, most of them are not voluntary accomplices. But if they were—it is simple ignorance on their part, and is that any reason for their undergoing the tortures of the damned in this world, not to mention what your Church teaches of the next world? Who brought them there—the man who deceived and betrayed them? Who acted on their weakness and drew them in?—their seducers?—the wretches who lure them to their destruction?—Not at all! Jail-birds and scoundrels as they are, deserving the gallows if any one does, which I do not think any one does—but you do—the ultimate miscreant is not even the Coll McSheens who protect it; but Society which permits it to go on unchecked when, by the least serious and sensible effort, it could prevent it."

"How?" I demanded.

"How! By determining to prevent it and then organizing to do so. By simply being honest. Has it not broken up the institution of slavery—highway robbery, organized murder—except by itself and its members? Of course, it could prevent it if it set itself to do it. But it is so steeped in selfishness and hypocrisy that it has no mind to anything that interferes with its pleasures."

We had now reached John Marvel's, where we found

John, just back from a visit to a poor girl who was ill, and his account only added fuel to Wolffert's flaming wrath. He was pacing up and down the floor, as small as it was, his face working, his eyes flashing, and suddenly he let a light in on his ultimate motive. He launched out in a tirade against existing social conditions that exceeded anything I had ever heard. He declared that within hearing of the most opulent and extravagant class the world had ever known were the cries and groans of the most wretched; that the former shut their ears and their eyes to it, and, contenting themselves with tossing a few pennies to a starving multitude, went on wallowing like swine in their own voluptuousness. Look at the most talked of young man in this city to-day, the *bon parti*, the coveted of aspiring mothers. He lives a life to make a beast blush. He is a seducer of women, a denizen of brothels; a gambler in the life-blood of women and children, a fatted swine, yet he is the courted and petted of those who call themselves the best people! Faugh! it makes me sick."

This was to some extent satisfactory to me, for I detested Canter; but I wondered if Wolffert did not have the same reason for disliking him that I had.

"There was never so selfish and hypocritical a society on earth," he exclaimed, "as this which now exists. In times past, under the feudal system, there was apparently some reason for the existence of the so-called upper classes—the first castle built made necessary all the others—the chief, at least, protected the subjects

from the rapine of others, and he was always ready to imperil his life; but now—this! When they all claim to know, and do know much, they sit quiet in their own smug content like fatted swine, and let rapine, debauchery, and murder go on as it never has gone on in the last three hundred years."

"What are you talking about?" I demanded, impressed by his vehemence, but mystified by his furious indictment. He cooled down for a moment, and wiped his hand across his eyes.

"I am fresh from the scene of as brutal a butchery," he said, "as has taken place within a thousand years. Israel is undergoing to-day the most extensive and complete persecution that has existed since the close of the crusades. No wonder the young women fall victims to the scoundrels who offer them an asylum in a new land and lure them to their destruction with gifts of gold and words of peace. And this is what Society does—the virtue-boasting Society of the twentieth century! They speak of anarchy!—What they mean is a condition which disturbs the repose of the rich and powerful. There is anarchy now—the anarchy that consists of want of equal government for rich and poor alike. Look at John Marvel, here, preaching a gospel of universal love and acting it, too."

"Wolffert," said Marvel, softly, "don't. Leave me out—you know I do not—you are simply blinded by your affection for me——"

But Wolffert swept on. "Yes, he does—if any man ever does—he lives for others—and what does he get?

Shunted off by a fat, sleek, self-seeking priest, who speaks smooth things to a people who will have nothing else."

"Wolffert, you must not," protested John; "I cannot allow you."

But Wolffert was in full tide. With a gesture he put John's protest by. "—To preach and teach the poor how to be patient—how to suffer in silence——"

"Now, Leo," said John, taking him by the shoulders, "I must stop you—you are just tired, excited—overworked. If they suffer patiently they are so much the better off—their lot will be all the happier in the next world."

Wolffert sat down on the bed with a smile. "What are you going to do with such a man?" he said to me, with a despairing shrug. "And you know the curious thing is he believes it."

I went to my own room, feeling still like the prodigal, and that I had somehow gotten back home. But I had a deeper and more novel feeling. A new light had come to me, faintly, but still a light. What had I ever done except for myself? Here were two men equally as poor as I, living the life of self-denial—one actually by choice, the other as willingly and uncomplainingly as though it were by choice, and both not only content, but happy. Why should not I enter the brotherhood? Here was something far higher and nobler than anything I had ever contemplated taking part in. What was it that withheld me? Was it, I questioned myself, that I, with no association whatever in the town except the poor,

yet belonged to the class that Wolffert crusaded against? Was there something fundamentally wrong with society? I could not enter freely into Wolffert's rhapsody of hate for the oppressors, nor yet into John Marvel's quiet, deep, and unreasoning love of Mankind. Yet I began to see dimly things I had never had a glimmer of before.

The association with my old friends made life a wholly different thing for me, and I made through them many new friends. They were very poor and did not count for much in the world; but they were real people, and their life, simple and insignificant as it was, was real and without sham. I found, indeed, that one got much nearer to the poor than to the better class—their life was more natural; small things matter so much more to them. In fact, the smallest thing may be a great thing to a poor man. Also I found a kindness and generosity quite out of proportion to that of the well-to-do. However poor and destitute a man or a family might be there was always some one poorer and more destitute, and they gave with a generosity that was liberality, indeed. For they gave of their penury what was their living. Whatever the organized charities may do, and they do much, the poor support the poor and they rely on each other to an extent unknown among their more fortunate fellow-citizens. As the Egyptian always stops to lift another's load, so here I found men always turning in to lend their aid.

Thus, gradually in the association of my friends who were working among the poor and helping to carry

their burdens, I began to find a new field and to reap in it a content to which I had long been a stranger. Also life began to take on for me a wholly new significance; as a field of work in which a man might escape from the slavery of a selfish convention which cramped the soul, into a larger life where service to mankind was the same with service to God, a life where forms were of small import and where the Christian and the Jew worked shoulder to shoulder and walked hand in hand. How much of my new feeling was due to Miss Eleanor Leigh, I did not take the trouble to consider.

"Father," said Eleanor, that evening, "I have a poor man whom I want a place for, and I must have it."

Mr. Leigh smiled. "You generally do have. Is this one poorer than those others you have saddled on me?"

"Now don't be a tease. Levity is not becoming in a man of your dignity. This man is very poor, indeed, and he has a houseful of children—and his wife——"

"I know," said Mr. Leigh, throwing up his hand with a gesture of appeal. "I surrender. They all have. What can this one do? Butts says every foreman in the shops is complaining that we are filling up with a lot of men who don't want to do anything and couldn't do it if they did."

"Oh! This man is a fine workman. He is an expert machinist—has worked for years in boiler shops—has driven——"

"Why is he out of a job if he is such a universal paragon? Does he drink? Remember, we can't take in men who drink—a bucket of beer cost us twelve

thousand dollars last year, not to mention the loss of two lives."

"He is as sober as a judge," declared his daughter, solemnly.

"What is it then?—Loafer?"

"He lost his place where he lived before by a strike."

"A striker, is he! Well, please excuse me. I have a plenty of that sort now without going outside to drag them in."

"No—no—no—" exclaimed Eleanor. "My! How you do talk! You won't give me a chance to say a word!"

"I like that," laughed her father. "Here I have been listening patiently to a catalogue of the virtues of a man I never heard of and simply asking questions, and as soon as I put in a pertinent one, away you go."

"Well, listen. You have heard of him. I'll tell you who he is. You remember my telling you of the poor family that was on the train last year when I came back in Aunt Sophia's car and we delayed the train?"

"I remember something about it. I never was sure as to the facts in the case. I only know that that paper contained a most infamous and lying attack on me——"

"I know it—it was simply infamous—but this poor man had nothing to do with it. That was his family, and they came on to join him because he had gotten a place. But the Union turned him out because he didn't belong to it, and then he wanted to join the Union, but the walking-delegate or something would not let him,

and now he has been out of work so long that they are simply starving."

"You want some money, I suppose?" Mr. Leigh put his hand in his pocket.

"No. I have helped him, but he isn't a beggar—he wants work. He's the real thing, Dad, and I feel rather responsible, because Aunt Sophia turned them out of the house they had rented and—though that young lawyer I told you of won his case for him and saved his furniture—the little bit he had—he has lost it all through the loan-sharks who eat up the poor. I tried to get Aunt Sophia to make her man, Gillis, let up on him, but she wouldn't interfere."

"That's strange, for she is not an unkind woman—she is only hard set in certain ways which she calls her principles."

"Yes, it was rather unfortunate. You see, Mr. Glave was there and Aunt Sophia!—you should have seen her."

She proceeded to give an account of Mrs. Argand's discovery of my identity, and to take us both off.

"They didn't pay the rent, I suppose?"

"Yes. But it was not his fault—just their misfortune. His wife's illness and being out of work and all—it just piled up on top of him. A man named Ring—something—a walking-delegate whom he used to know back in the East, got down on him, and followed him up, and when he was about to get in the Union, he turned him down. And, Dad, you've just got to give him a place."

"Wringman, possibly," said Mr. Leigh. "There's

a man of that name in the city who seems to be something of a leader. He's a henchman of Coll McSheen and does his dirty work for him. He has been trying to make trouble for us for some time. Send your man around to Butts to-morrow, and I'll see what we can do for him."

Eleanor ran and flung her arms around her father's neck. "Oh! Dad! If you only knew what a load you have lifted from my shoulders. I believe Heaven will bless you for this."

"I know Butts will," said Mr. Leigh, kissing her. "How's our friend, the Marvel, coming on?"

"Dad, he's a saint!"

"So I have heard before," said Mr. Leigh. "And that other one—how is he?"

"Which one?"

"Is there any other but the Jew? I have not heard of another reforming saint."

"No, he is a sinner," said Eleanor, laughing; and she went on to give an account of my episode with Pushkin, which she had learned from John Marvel, who, I may say, had done me more than justice in his relation of the matter.

"So the count thought a team had run over him, did he?"

"Yes, that's what Mr. Marvel said."

She related a brief conversation which had taken place between her and Pushkin and Mrs. Argand, after I left, in which Pushkin had undertaken to express his opinion of me, and she had given him to understand

that she knew the true facts in the matter of our collision. All of which I learned much later.

"Well, I must say," said Mr. Leigh, "your new friend appears to have 'his nerve with him,' as you say."

"Dad, I never use slang," said Miss Eleanor, severely. "I am glad you have promised to give poor McNeil a place, for, if you had not, I should have had to take him into the house."

Mr. Leigh laughed.

"I am glad, too, if that is the case. The last one you took in was a reformed drunkard, you said, and you know what happened to him and also to my wine."

"Yes, but this one is all right."

"Of course he is."

There was joy next day in one poor little household, for McNeil, who had been dragging along through the streets for days with a weight, the heaviest the poor have to bear, bowing him down—want of work—came into his little bare room where his wife and children huddled over an almost empty stove, with a new step and a fresh note in his voice. He had gotten a place and it meant life to him and to those he loved.

XXV

FATE LEADS

One evening I called at Mrs. Kale's to see my two old ladies of the bundles and also Mrs. Kale, for whom I had conceived a high regard on account of her kindness to the former as well as to myself, and in the course of my visit Miss Pansy gave me, for not the first time, an account of the way in which they had been reduced from what they thought affluence to what she very truly called "straitened circumstances." I confess that I was rather bored by her relation, which was given with much circumlocution until she mentioned casually that Miss Leigh had tried to interest her father in their case, but he had said it was too late to do anything. The mention of her name instantly made me alert. If she was interested, I was interested also. I began to ask questions, and soon had their whole story as well as she could give it.

"Why, it may or may not be too late," I said. "It is certainly very long ago, and the chances of being able to do anything now are very remote; but if there was a fraud, and it could be proved, it would not be too late —or, at least, might not be."

"Oh! Do you think that you could recover anything for us? Mr. McSheen said nothing could be

gotten out of it, and we paid him—a great deal," she sighed, "—everything we had in the world, almost."

"I do not say that, but if there was a fraud, and it could be proved, it might not be too late."

The name of McSheen had given me a suspicion that all might not be straight. Nothing could be if he was connected with it. I recalled what Wolffert had told me of McSheen's selling out. Moreover, her story had unconsciously been a moving one. They had evidently been hardly used and, I believed, defrauded. So, when she pressed me, and promised if she were ever able to do so she "would reward me generously," as if, poor soul, she could ever reward any one save with her prayers, I undertook to look into the matter for them, and I began next day.

I will not go into the steps I took to reach my ends, nor the difficulties I encountered, which grew as I progressed in my investigation until they appeared almost insurmountable; but finally I struck a lead which at last led me to a conviction that if I could but secure the evidence I could establish such a case of fraud for my two old clients as would give promise of a fair chance to recover for them, at least, a part of their patrimony. The difficulty, or one of them—for they were innumerable—was that to establish their case it was necessary to prove that several men who had stood high in the public esteem, had been guilty of such disregard of the rights of those to whom they stood in the relation of trustees that it would be held a fraud. I was satisfied that had McSheen taken proper steps to secure his

clients' rights, he might have succeeded and further, that he had been bought off, but the difficulty was to prove it.

However, I determined to make the effort to get the proof and my zeal was suddenly quickened.

I had now begun to watch for my young lady wherever I went, and it was astonishing how my quickened senses enabled me to find her in the most crowded thoroughfare, or in strange and out-of-the-way places. It was almost as if there were some secret power which drew us together. And when I was blessed to meet her the day was always one of sunshine for me, however heavy lowered the dim clouds.

The next afternoon our meeting was so unexpected that I could not but set it down to the ruling of a higher power. I had gone out to see how my McNeil clients were coming on, having doubtless some latent hope that I might find her there; but she had not been there for several days. They had heard of her, however, for she had got the husband and father a place and that made sunshine in the wretched little hovel, as bare as it was. I was touched by their gratitude, and after taking note of the wretched poverty of the family, and promising that I would try to get the mother some sort of work, I strolled on. I had not gone far when I suddenly came on her face to face. The smile that came into her eyes must have brought my soul into my face.

Love is the true miracle-worker. It can change the most prosaic region into a scene of romance. At sight of Eleanor Leigh's slim figure the dull street suddenly became an enchanted land.

"Well, we appear fated to meet," she said with a smile and intonation that my heart feasted on for days. She little knew how assiduously I had played Fate during these past weeks, haunting the streets near her home or those places which she blessed with her presence. This meeting, however, was purely accidental, unless it be true, as I sometimes almost incline to think, that some occult power which we cannot understand rules all our actions and guides our footsteps toward those we love supremely. John Marvel always called it Providence.

"Well, may I not see you home?" I asked, and without waiting for her consent, I took it for granted and turned back with her, though she protested against taking me out of my way. I had indeed some difficulty in not saying then and there, "My way is where you are."

She had been to see one of her scholars who was sick, "the little cripple, whom you know," she said. I suddenly began to think cripples the most interesting of mortals. She gave me, as we strolled along, an account of her first acquaintance with her and her mother; and of how John Marvel had found out their condition and helped them. Then she had tried to help them a little. and had gotten the mother to let her have the little girl at her school.

"Now they are doing a little better," she said, "but you never saw such wretchedness. The woman had given up everything in the world to try to save her husband, and such a wretched hole as they lived in you

couldn't imagine. They did not have a single article of furniture in their room when I—when Mr. Marvel first found them. It had all gone to the Loan Company—they were starving."

John Marvel had a nose like a pointer for all who were desolate and oppressed. How he discovered them, except, as Eleanor Leigh said, by some sort of a sixth sense like that of the homing pigeon, surpasses my comprehension. It is enough that he found and furrowed them out. Thus, he had learned that a little girl, a child of a noted criminal, had been ill-treated by the children at a public school and that her mother and herself were almost starving, and had hastened at once to find her. Like a hunted animal she had gone and hidden herself in what was scarcely better than a den. Here John Marvel found her, in a wretched cellar, the mother ill on a pallet of straw, and both starving, without food or fire. The door was barred, as was her heart, and it was long before any answer came to the oft-repeated knock. But at last his patience was rewarded. The door opened a bare inch, and a fierce black eye in a haggard white face peered at him through the chink.

"What do you want?"

"To help you."

The door opened slowly and John Marvel entered an abode which he said to me afterward he was glad for the first time in his life to be so near-sighted as not to be able to see. A pallet of rags lay in a corner, and on a box crouched, rather than sat, a little girl with a broken

crutch by her side, her eyes fastened on the newcomer with a gaze of half bewilderment. It was some time before John Marvel could get anything out of the woman, but he held a key which at last unlocks every heart,—a divine and penetrating sympathy. And presently the woman told him her story. Her husband was a fugitive from justice. She did not say so, but only that he had had to leave the city because the police were after him. His friends had turned against him and against her. She did not know where her husband was, but believed he had left the country, unless, indeed, he were dead. She was waiting to hear from him, and meantime everything which she had had gone, and now, though she did not say so, they were starving. To relieve them was as instinctive with John Marvel as to breathe. The next step was to help them permanently. It was hard to do, because the woman was at bay and was as suspicious as a she-wolf, and the child was as secretive as a young cub. John turned to one, however, who he believed, and with good reason, knew how to do things which were lost to his dull comprehension.

The following day into that den walked Eleanor Leigh, and it was to visit this woman and her child that she was going the morning I met her coming down the steps, when she dropped her violets on the sidewalk. It was a hard task which John Marvel had set her, for as some women may yield to women rather than to men, so there are some who are harder to reach by the former than by the latter, and the lot of Red Talman's wife had separated her from her sex and turned her

into a state where she felt that all women were against her. But Eleanor Leigh was equal to the task; having gained admission through the open sesame of John Marvel's name she first applied herself to win the child. Seating herself on the box she began to play with the little girl and to show her the toys she had brought,—toys which the child had never seen before. It was not long before the little thing was in her lap and then the woman had been won. When Eleanor Leigh came away everything had been arranged, and the following night Red Talman's wife and child moved to another quarter of the town, to a clean little room not far from the small school on the way to which I first met the little waif.

"But you don't go into such places by yourself? I said to her when she had told me their story. "Why, it might cost you your life."

"Oh, no! No one is going to trouble me. I am not afraid."

"Well, it is not safe," I protested. "I wish you wouldn't do it." It was the first time I had ever ventured to assume such an attitude toward her. "I don't care how brave you are, it is not safe."

"Oh! I am not brave at all. In fact, I am an awful coward. I am afraid of mice and all such ferocious beasts—and as to a spider—why, little Miss Muffet was a heroine to me."

"I know," I nodded, watching the play of expression in her eyes with secret delight.

"But I am not afraid of people. They are about the only things I am not afraid of. They appear to me so

pitiful in their efforts. Why should one fear them? Besides, I don't think about myself when I am doing anything—only about what I am doing."

"What is the name of your little protégée's father—the criminal?" I asked.

"Talman—they call him 'Red Talman.' He's quite noted, I believe."

"'Red Talman!' Why, he is one of the most noted criminals in the country. I remember reading of his escape some time ago. He was in for a long term. It was said no prison could hold him."

"Yes, he has escaped," she said demurely.

I once more began to protest against her going about such places by herself as she had described, but she only laughed at me for my earnestness. She had also been to see the Miss Tippses, she said, and she gave an amusing and, at the same time, a pathetic account of Miss Pansy's brave attempt to cover up their poverty.

"It is hard to do anything for them. One can help the Talmans; but it is almost impossible to help the decayed gentlefolk. One has to be so careful not to appear to know her pathetic little deceits, and I find myself bowing and accepting all her little devices and transparent deceptions of how comfortable they are, when I know that maybe she may be faint with hunger at that very time."

I wondered if she knew their story. But she suddenly said:

"Tell me about their case. I do trust you can win it."

I was only too ready to tell her anything. So, as we walked along I told her all I knew or nearly all.

"Oh! you must win it! To think that such robbery can be committed! There must be some redress! Who were the wretches who robbed them? They ought to be shown up if they were in their graves! I hate to know things and not know the person who committed them." As she turned to me with flashing eyes, I felt a great desire to tell her but how could I do so?

"Tell me. Do you know them?"

"Yes—some of them."

"Well, tell me their names."

"Why do you wish to know?" I hesitated.

"Because I do. Isn't that sufficient?"

I wanted to say yes, but still I hesitated.

"Was it anybody—I know?"

"Why——"

"I must know." Her eyes were on my face and I yielded.

"Mr. Argand was one of the Directors—in fact, was the president of the road—but I have no direct proof—yet."

"Do you mean my aunt's husband?"

I nodded.

She turned her face away.

"I ought not to have told you," I added.

"Oh! yes, you ought. I would have wanted to know if it had been my father. I have the dearest father in the world. You do not know how good and kind he is,

and how generous to every one. He has almost ruined himself working for others."

I said I had no doubt he was all she said; but my heart sank as I recalled my part in the paper I had written about him. I knew I must tell her some time, but I hesitated to do it now. I began to talk about myself, a subject I am rather fond of, but on this occasion I had possibly more excuse than usual.

"My mother also died when I was a child," she said, sighing, as I related the loss of mine and said that I was just beginning to realize what it was. It appeared to draw us nearer together. I was conscious of her sympathy, and under its influence I went on and told her the wretched story of my life, my folly and my failure, and my final resolve to begin anew and be something worth while. I did not spare myself and I made no concealments. I felt her sympathy and it was as sweet to me as ever was grace to a famished soul. I had been so long alone that it seemed to unlock Heaven.

"I believe you will succeed," she said, turning and looking me in the face.

A sudden fire sprang into my brain and throbbed in my heart. "If you will say that to me and mean it, I will."

"I do believe it. Of course, I mean it." She stopped and looked me again full in the face, and her eyes seemed to me to hold the depths of Heaven: deep, calm, confiding, and untroubled as a child's. They stirred me deeply. Why should I not declare myself! She was, since her father's embarrassment, of which I had read,

no longer beyond my reach. Did I not hold the future in fee? Why might not I win her?

For some time we drifted along, talking about nothing of moment, skirting the shore of the charmed unknown, deep within which lay the mystery of that which we both possibly meant, however indefinitely, to explore. Then we struck a little further in; and began to exchange experiences—first our early impressions of John Marvel and Wolffert. It was then that she told me of her coming to know John Marvel in the country that night during the epidemic. She did not tell of her part in the relief of the sick; but it was unnecessary. John Marvel had already told me that. It was John himself, with his wonderful unselfishness and gift of self-abnegation, of whom she spoke, and Wolffert with his ideal ever kept in sight.

"What turned you to philanthropy?" I asked with a shade of irony in my voice more marked than I had intended. If she was conscious of it she took no notice of it beyond saying,

"If you mean the poor, pitiful little bit of work I do trying to help Mr. Marvel and Mr. Wolffert among the poor—John Marvel did, and Mr. Wolffert made the duty clear. They are the complement of each other, Jew and Gentile, and if all men were like them there would be no divisions."

I expressed my wonder that she should have kept on, and not merely contented herself with giving money or helping for that one occasion. Sudden converts generally relapse.

"Oh! it was not any conversion. It gave life a new interest for me. I was bored to death by the life I had been leading since I came out. It was one continuous round of lunches, dinners, parties, dances, soirées, till I felt as if I were a wooden steed in a merry-go-round, wound up and wearing out. You see I had, in a way, always been 'out.' I used to go about with my father, and sit at the table and hear him and his friends—men friends—for I did not come to the table when ladies were there, till I was fifteen—talk about all sorts of things, and though I often did not understand them, I used to ask him and he would explain them, and then I read up and worked to try to amuse him, so that when I really came out, I found the set in which I was thrown rather young. It was as if I had fallen through an opened door into a nursery. I was very priggish, I have no doubt, but I was bored. Jim Canter and Milly McSheen were amusing enough for a while, but really they were rather young. I was fond of driving and dancing, but I did not want to talk about it all the time, and then as I got older——"

"How old?" I demanded, amused at her idea of age.

"Why, eighteen. How old do you think I should have been?"

"Oh! I don't know; you spoke as if you were as old as Anna in the temple. Pray go on."

"Well, that's all. I just could not stand it. Aunt Sophie was bent on my marrying—somebody whom I could not bear—and oh! it was an awful bore. I looked around and saw the society women I was supposed to

copy, and I'd rather have been dead than like that—eating, clothes, and bridge—that made up the round, with men as the final end and reward. I think I had hardly taken it in, till my eyes were opened once by a man's answer to a question as to who had been in the boxes at a great concert which he had attended and enjoyed: 'Oh! I don't know—the usual sort—women who go to be seen with other women's husbands. The musical people were in the gallery listening.' Next time I went my eyes had been opened and I listened and enjoyed the music. So, when I discovered there were real men in the world doing things, and really something that women could do, too, I found that life had a new interest, that is all."

"You know," she said, after a pause in which she was reflecting and I was watching the play of expression in her face and dwelling in delicious reverie on the contour of her soft cheek, "You know, if I ever amount to anything in this world, it will be due to that man." This might have meant either.

I thought I knew of a better artificer than even John Marvel or Leo Wolffert, to whom was due all the light that was shed from her life, but I did not wish to question anything she said of old John. I was beginning to feel at peace with all the world.

We were dawdling along now and I remember we stopped for a moment in front of a place somewhat more striking looking and better lighted than those about it, something between a pawnbroker's shop and a loan-office. The sign over the door was of a Guar-

anty Loan Company, and added the word "Home" to Guaranty. It caught my eye and hers at the same moment. The name was that of the robber-company in which my poor client, McNeil, in his futile effort to pay his rent, had secured a small loan by a chattel-mortgage on his pitiful little furniture at something like three hundred per cent. The entire block belonged, as I had learned at the time, to the Argand Estate, and I had made it one of the points in my arraignment of that eleemosynary institution that the estate harbored such vampires as the two men who conducted this scoundrelly business in the very teeth of the law. On the windows were painted legends suggesting that within all money needed by any one might be gotten, one might have supposed, for nothing. I said, "With such a sign as that we might imagine that the poor need never want for money."

She suddenly flamed: "I know them. They are the greatest robbers on earth. They grind the face of the Poor until one wonders that the earth does not open and swallow them up quick. They are the thieves who ought to be in jail instead of such criminals as even that poor wretch, Talman, as great a criminal as he is. Why, they robbed his poor wife of every stick of furniture she had on earth, under guise of a loan, and turned her out in the snow with her crippled child. She was afraid to apply to any one for redress, and they knew it. And if it had not been for John Marvel, they would have starved or have frozen to death."

"For John Marvel and you," I interjected.

"No—only him. What I did was nothing—less than nothing. He found them, with that wonderful sixth sense of his. It is his heart. And he gets no credit for anything—even from you. Oh! sometimes I cannot bear it. I would like to go to him once and just tell him what I truly think of him."

"Why don't you, then?"

"Because—I cannot. But if I were you, I would. He would not—want me to do it! But some day I am going to Dr. Capon and tell him—tell him the truth."

She turned, facing me, and stood with clenched hands, uplifted face, and flashing eyes—breasting the wind which, at the moment, blew her skirts behind her, and as she poured forth her challenge, she appeared to me almost like some animate statue of victory.

"Do you know—I think Mr. Marvel and Mr. Wolffert are almost the most Christian men I ever saw; and their life is the strongest argument in favor of Christianity, I ever knew."

"Why, Wolffert is a Jew—he is not a Christian at all."

"He is—I only wish I were half as good a one," she said. "I do not care what he calls himself, he is. Why, think of him beside Doctor—beside some of those who set up to be burning and shining lights!"

"Well, I will agree to that." In fact, I agreed with everything she had said, though I confess to a pang of jealousy at such unstinted praise, as just as I thought

it. And I began in my selfishness to wish I were more like either of her two models. As we stood in the waning light—for we were almost standing, we moved so slowly—my resolution took form.

It was not a propitious place for what I suddenly resolved to do. It was certainly not a romantic spot. For it was in the centre, the very heart, of a mean shopping district, a region of small shops and poor houses, and the autumn wind had risen with an edge on it and laden with dust, which made the thinly clad poor quicken their steps as they passed along and try to shrink closer within their threadbare raiment. The lights which were beginning to appear only added to the appearance of squalor about us. But like the soft Gallius I cared for none of these things. I saw only the girl beside me, whose awakened soul seemed to me even more beautiful than her beautiful frame. And so far as I was concerned, we might have been in Paradise or in a desert.

I recall the scene as if it were yesterday, the very softness in her face, the delicacy of her contour; the movement of her soft hair on her blue-veined white temple and her round neck as a gentle breath of air stirred it; the dreamy depths of her eyes as the smile faded in them and she relapsed into a reverie. An impulse seized me and I cast prudence, wisdom, reason, all to the winds and gave the rein to my heart.

"Come here." I took her arm and drew her a few steps beyond to where there was a vacant house. "Sit down here a moment." I spread my handkerchief on

the dusty steps, and she sat down, smiling after her little outbreak.

Leaning over her, I took hold of her hand and lifted it to my breast, clasping it very tight.

"Look at me—" She had already looked in vague wonder, her eyes wide open, beginning the question which her lips were parting to frame. "Don't say that to me—that about your belief in me—unless you mean it all—all. I love you and I mean to succeed for you—with you. I mean to marry you—some day."

The look in her eyes changed, but for a second they did not leave my face. My eyes were holding them.

"Oh!—What?" she gasped, while her hand went up to her throat.

Then she firmly, but as I afterward recalled, slowly withdrew her hand from my grasp, which made no attempt to detain it.

"Are you crazy?" she gasped. And I truly believe she thought I was.

"Yes—no—I don't know. If I am, my insanity begins and ends only in you. I know only one thing—that I love you and that some day—some day, I am going to marry you, though the whole world and yourself oppose me."

She stood up.

"But, oh! why did you say that?"

"Because it is true."

"We were such good friends."

"We never were—I never was—for a moment."

"You were."

"Never."

"We were just beginning to understand each other, to be such good friends, and now you have ended it all."

"That cannot be ended which never had a beginning. I don't want your friendship; I want your love and I will have it."

"No, I cannot. Oh! why did you? I must be going."

"Why? Sit down."

"No, I cannot. Good-by."

"Good-by."

She hesitated, and then without looking, held out her hand. "Good-by."

I took her hand and this time kissed it, as I remember, almost fiercely. She tried to stop me, but I held it firmly.

"You must not do that; you have no right." She was standing very straight now.

"I took the right."

"Promise me you will never say that again."

"What?"

"What you said at first."

"I don't know what you mean. I have been saying the same thing all the time—ever since I knew you—ever since I was born—that I love you."

"You must never say that again—promise me before I go."

"I promise you," I said slowly, "that I will say it as long as I live."

She appeared to let herself drift for a half second, then she gave a little catch at herself.

"No, really, you must not—I cannot allow you. I have no right to let you. I must go, and if you are a friend of mine, you will never——"

"Listen to me," I interrupted firmly. "I have not asked you for anything; I have not asked your permission; I am not a friend of yours and I shall never be that. I don't want to be your friend. I love you, and I am going to win your love. Now you can go Come on."

We walked on and I saw her safely home. We talked about everything and I told her much of myself. But she was plainly thinking not about what I was saying then, but what I had said on the dusty steps. When we reached her home, I saved her embarrassment. I held out my hand and said, "Good-by, I love you."

No woman can quite let a man go, at least, no woman with a woman's coquetry can. After I had turned away, what must Eleanor Leigh do but say demurely, "I hope you will win your case." I turned back, of course. "I will," I said, "in both courts." Then I strode away. I went home feeling somewhat as a man might who, after shipwreck, had reached an unknown shore. I was in a new land and knew not where I stood or how; or whether the issue would be life or death. I only knew that I had passed a crisis in my life and whatever came I must meet it. I was strangely happy, yet I had had no word of encouragement.

To have declared one's love has this in it, that henceforth the one you love can never be wholly indifferent to you. I went home feeling that I had acquired a new

relation to Eleanor Leigh and that somehow I had a right to her whether she consented or not. My love for her, as ardent as it had been before, had suddenly deepened. It had, in a way, also become purer. I went over and over and dwelt on every word she had ever uttered to me, every gentle look I had ever seen her give, every tender expression that had illumined her face or softened her eyes, and I found myself thinking of her character as I had never done before. I planned how I should meet her next and tried to fancy how she would look and what she would say. I wondered vaguely what she would think of me when she reached her room and thought over what I had said. But I soon left this realm of vague conjecture for the clearly defined elysium of my own love. Had I known what I learned only a long time afterward—how she acted and what she thought of on reaching home, I might have been somewhat consoled though still mystified.

XXVI

COLL McSHEEN'S METHODS

It is astonishing what a motive power love is. With Eleanor Leigh in my heart, I went to work on my Tipps case with fury.

When I applied at the offices of the P. D. & B. D. and asked to be shown the books of the old company which had been reorganized and absorbed, I was met first by the polite assurance that there never was such a road as I mentioned, then that it had been wound up long ago and reorganized. Next, as I appeared somewhat firm, I was informed that the books had been burned up in a great fire, spoken of as Caleb Balderstone used to speak of the Ravenswood fire, as "the fire." This would have been an irremediable loss, but for the fact that I knew that there had been no fire since the reorganization of the company. I stated this fact with more positiveness than was usually employed in those offices and announced that unless those books were produced without further delay or misrepresentation, I would file a bill at once which would open the eyes of a number of persons. This procured for me an interview with an official of the vice-presidential rank—my first real advance. This proved to be my old acquaintance, Mr. Gillis, the agent of the Argand Estate. When I entered he wore an expression of sweet content as of

a cat about to swallow a mouse. It was evident that he meant to have his revenge on me now. After stating my object in calling, with so much circumstantiality that there could be no mistake about it, I was informed by Mr. Gillis, briefly but firmly, that those books were not accessible, that they were "private property and not open to the public."

Stillman Gillis was a wiry, clear-eyed, firm-mouthed, middle-sized man of about middle age as older men regard it. He had a pleasant address, perfect self-assurance, and a certain cool impudence in his manner which I have often observed in the high officials of large corporations. He had, I knew, been the private secretary and confidential man of Mr. David Argand.

"I am aware that the books are private property," I said, "but it happens that I am myself one of the owners—I represent two very considerable owners of the stock of the old company."

He shook his head pleasantly. "That makes no difference."

I could not help thinking of the turnkey at the jail. It was insolence, but only of a different sort.

"You mean to say that it makes no difference whether or not I am a stockholder when I demand to see the books of the company in which I hold my interest?"

"Not the slightest," he admitted.

"I suppose you have consulted counsel as to this?"

"Oh! yes; but it was not necessary."

"Well! you have the books?"

"Oh! yes."

"Because some of your people told me that they had been burnt up in a fire."

"Did they tell you that?" he smilingly asked. "They did that to save you trouble."

"Considerate in them."

"Of course, we have the books—in our vaults."

"Buried?" I hazarded.

He nodded. "Beyond the hope of resurrection." He took up his pen to show that the interview was ended; and I took up my hat.

"Do you mind telling me who your counsel is that you consulted in these matters? I might prevail on him to change his mind."

"Oh! no. Mr. Collis McSheen is our counsel—one of them."

"Has he specifically given you this advice?"

"He has." He turned to his stenographer. "Take this letter."

"So—o." I reflected a moment and then tilted back my chair.

"Mr. Gillis—one moment more of your valuable time, and I will relieve you."

"Well?" He turned back to me with a sudden spark in his gray eye. "Really, I have no more time to give you."

"Just a moment. You are mistaken in thinking you are giving me time. I have been giving you time. The next time we meet, you will be a witness in court under subpœna and I will examine you."

"Examine me? As to what, pray?" His face had

grown suddenly dark and his insolence had turned to anger.

"As to what you know of the fraud that was perpetrated on the heirs of a certain Colonel Tipps who built and once largely owned the road I have spoken of."

"Fraud, sir! What do you mean?"

"As to what you know—if anything—of the arrangement by which a certain Collis McSheen sold out his clients, the said heirs of the said Colonel Tipps, to a certain Mr. Argand, whose private secretary you then were; and whose retained counsel he then became."

"What!"

His affected coolness was all gone. His countenance was black with a storm of passion, where wonder, astonishment, rage, all played their part, and I thought I saw a trace of dismay as well.

"What do you mean, sir! What do I know of the—the fraud—the arrangements, if there ever were any such arrangements as those you speak of?"

I was the insolent one now. I bowed.

"That is what I am going to ask you to tell in court. You have the books, and you will bring them with you when you come, under a *subpœna duces tecum*. Good-day." I walked out.

As I approached my office, I saw Collis McSheen bolting out of the door and down the street, his face as black as a thunder-cloud. He was in such a hurry that he did not see me, though he nearly ran over me. He had evidently been summoned by telephone.

I was working on my bill a few days later when to my surprise Peck walked into my office. I knew instantly that there was mischief afoot. He looked unusually smug. He had just arrived that morning, he said. Mr. Poole had some important interests in a railway property which required looking after, and he had come on to see about them. There was not much to do, as the road was being capitally managed; but they thought best to have some one on the ground to keep an eye on the property, and remembering our old friendship, he had suggested that I be retained to represent Mr. Poole, if anything should at any time arise, and Mr. Poole had, of course, acted on his advice. Mr. Poole had in fact, always been such a friend of mine, etc. The trouble with Peck was that he always played a trump even when it was not necessary.

I expressed my sense of obligation to both him and Mr. Poole, but in my heart could not help recalling the chances Mr. Poole had thrown away to help me in the past.

"What sort of interests are they?" I inquired.

"Railway interests. He has both stocks and bonds—second mortgage bonds. But they are as good as gold—pay dividends straight along. The railway has never failed to increase its net earnings every year for ten years, and is a very important link in a transcontinental line."

"What railway did you say it was?" I inquired, for I had observed that he had not mentioned the line.

"Oh! ah! the P. D. & B. D."

"Oh! Well, the fact is, Peck, I don't know that I could represent Mr. Poole in any litigation connected with that road."

"Oh! it is not litigation, my dear fellow. You'd as well talk about litigation over the Bank of England. It is to represent him as a sort of regular——"

"I know," I cut him short, "but I think there will be some litigation. The fact is, I have a claim against that road."

"A claim against the P. D. & B. D.! For damages, I suppose?"

"No. To upset the reorganization that took place——"

Peck burst out laughing. "To upset the reorganization of that road which took place ten—twenty— How many years ago was it? You'd better try to upset the government of the United States."

"Oh! No——"

"Come now. Don't be Quixotic. I've come here to give you a good case that may be the beginning of a great practice for you. Why you may become general counsel."

"I thought Mr. McSheen was general counsel? You said so, I remember, when you were here before."

"Why, ah! yes. He is in a way. You would, of course, be—in a way, his—ah——"

"Peck," I said, and I kept my eye on him blandly. "Have you seen Mr. McSheen since your arrival?"

"Why, yes, I have. I had to see him, of course, because he is, as I told you, the general counsel——"

'In a way?" I interpolated.

"Yes. And of course I had to see him. It would not have been quite professional if I had not."

"And he assents to your proposition?"

"Oh! yes, entirely. In fact, he—" He paused and then added, "is entirely satisfied. He says you are an excellent lawyer."

"Much obliged to him. I beat him in the only case I ever had against him."

"What was that?"

"Oh, a small case against the Argand Estate."

"Oh! Well now, Glave, don't be Quixotic. Here is the chance of your life. All the big people—the Argand Estate, Mr. Leigh, Mr. McSheen, Mr. Canter. Why, it may lead you—no one can tell where!"

"That is true," I said, quietly. Then quite as quietly I asked: "Did Mr. McSheen send for you to come on here?"

"Did Mr. McSheen send for me to come on here? Why, no. Of course, he did not. I came on to look after Mr. Poole's interest."

"And to employ me to represent him?"

"Yes."

"And to give up my clients as McSheen did?"

"What!"

"Peck, tell Mr. McSheen that neither my dog nor myself is for sale."

"What! I—I don't understand," stammered Peck.

"Well, maybe so. But you give McSheen the message. He will understand it. And now I will explain

it to you, so you may understand." I explained briefly to him my connection with the matter and my proposed line of action; and he naturally endeavored to satisfy me as to the absolute futility of such a course as I proposed.

"Why, consider," he said, "the people you will have to contend with—the idea that you can prove fraud against such persons as Mr. Leigh, the Argands, Mr. McSheen."

"I don't expect to prove fraud on Mr. Leigh," I quickly interposed.

"You will have to sue him. He is a director."

"I know it. But he came in after the transaction was completed and I believe knew nothing about it, and he has left the directory. But why are you so interested in Mr. Leigh? His interests in the street-car lines are directly opposed to Mr. Poole's?"

"I am not interested in Mr. Leigh, but in you. Why, do you imagine any judge in this city would even consider a bill charging fraud against such persons as those I have mentioned? For I tell you they will not. You will just make a lot of enemies and have your trouble for your pains."

"Perhaps so—but Peck, you have not mentioned all the people I shall have to sue."

"Who do you mean? I have only mentioned one or two."

"Mr. Poole."

Peck's countenance fell.

"Mr. Poole! What did he have to do with it?"

"He was one of them—one of those who engineered the reorganization—and swin— engineered the heirs of Colonel Tipps and some others out of their interest. Well, give my message to Mr. McSheen," I said, rising, for Peck's duplicity came over me like a wave. "You may understand it better now. Neither my dog nor I is for sale. Peck, you ought to know me better."

Peck left with that look on his face that used to annoy me so at college—something that I can best describe as a mechanical simper. It had no warmth in it and was the twilight between indifference and hate.

Peck evidently conveyed my message.

While I worked on my case, Mr. McSheen was not idle. Not long after, I was walking along a narrow, dark street on my way home from my office late one night when I was struck by Dix's conduct. It was very strange. Instead of trotting along zigzag going from corner to corner and inspecting alleyways for chance cats to enliven life, as he usually did at night when the streets were fairly empty, he kept close at my heels, now and then actually rubbing against my knee as he walked, as he did in the crowded section when I took him along. And once or twice he stopped and, half turning his head, gave a low, deep growl, a sure signal of his rising anger. I turned and gazed around, but seeing no cause for his wrath, concluded that a dog was somewhere in the neighborhood, whom he detected though I could not see him. I was aware afterward that I had seen two men pass on the other side of the street and that they

crossed over to my side near the corner ahead of me; but I took no notice of them. I had a pleasanter subfect of thought as I strolled along. I was thinking of Eleanor Leigh and building air castles in which she was always the chatelaine.

Dix's low growl fell on my ear, but I paid no heed. The next second—it was always a little confused in my mind, the blow came so quickly—I was conscious of a man—or two men, springing from behind something just at my side and of Dix's launching himself at them with a burst of rage, and at the same moment, something happened to me—I did not know what. A myriad stars darted before my eyes and I felt a violent pain in my shoulder. I staggered and fell to my knees; but sprang up again under a feeling that I must help Dix, who seemed to have been seized by one of the men in his arms, a stout stumpy fellow, while the other was attempting to kill him with a bludgeon which he carried. I flung myself on the latter, and seizing him by the throat bore him back against the wall, when he suddenly twisted loose and took to his heels. Then I turned on the other who, I thought, was trying to carry Dix off. I found, however, that instead he was making a fight for his life. At the moment he dropped a pistol which he was drawing and I sprang for it and got it. Dix had leaped straight for his throat and, having made good his hold, had hung on and the man was already nearly strangled. "For God's sake, take him off. Kill him. I'm choking," he gasped as with weakening hands he tore at the dog's massive shoulders. "I'm

choking." And at that moment he staggered, stumbled, and sank to his knees with a groan.

Fearing that he would be killed on the spot, though I was sick and dizzy from the blow, I seized Dix by the throat and with a strong wrench of his windpipe at the same time that I gave him an order, I broke his hold. And fortunately for the ruffian, his heavy coat collar had partially saved his throat.

The wretch staggered to his feet with an oath and supported himself against the wall while I pacified Dix, who was licking his chops, his hair still up on his back, his eyes still on his enemy.

"Are you hurt?" I asked, for, though still dizzy, the need to act had brought my senses back.

"What business is that of yours?" he demanded brutally. "Wait a minute. I'll kill that d——d dog."

The reply to my inquiry was so brutal that my anger rose.

"You drunken beast! Say a word and I'll give you to him again and let him worry you like a rat. You see him! Keep back, Dix!" for the dog, recognizing my anger, had advanced a little and flattened himself to spring on the least provocation.

"I didn't mean no offence," the fellow growled. "But I don't like a d——d dog to be jumpin' at me."

"You don't! What did you mean by trying to murder me?"

"I didn't try to murder you."

"You did. I have no money—not a cent. I'm as poor as you are."

"I wa'n't after no money."

"What then? What had I ever done to you that you should be after me?"

"I wa'n't after you."

"You were. You tried to kill me. You've cut my head open and no thanks to you that you didn't kill me."

"'T wa'n't me. 'T was that other fellow, the skunk that runned away and left me."

"What's his name?"

"I don' know. I never seen him before."

"What are you lying to me for? What's his name and why was he after me? Tell me and I'll let you go —otherwise—I'll give you to the police."

"I'll tell you this—he's a friend of a man you know."

"Of a man I know? Who?"

"He's a big man, too."

"A big man! Do you mean— You don't mean Coll McSheen?"

"I didn't tell you, did I? You can swear to that. Now give me five dollars and let me go."

"I haven't any money at all, but I'll take you to a doctor and get your wound dressed. I have to go to one, too."

"I don' want no doctor—I'm all right."

"No, I won't give you up," I said, "if you'll tell me the truth. I'm not after you. If I'd wanted to give you up, I'd have fired this pistol and brought the police. Come on. But don't try to run off or I'll let you have it."

He came along, at first surlily enough; but presently he appeared to get in a better temper, at least with me, and turned his abuse on his pal for deserting him. He declared that he had not meant to do me any harm, in fact, that he had only met the other man accidentally and did not know what he was going to do, etc.

I was so fortunate as to find my friend Dr. Traumer at home, and he looked after the wound in the scoundrel's throat and then took a look at my hurt.

"You had a close graze," he said, "but I don't think it is anything more serious than a bad scrape on your head, and a laceration and bruise on the shoulder."

While he was working on the footpad I telephoned Langton, got hold of him and asked him to come there, which he said he would do at once. Just as the doctor was through with me, Langton walked in. I never saw so surprised an expression on his face as that when his eyes fell on my thug. I saw at once that he knew him. But as usual he said nothing. The thug, too, evidently knew he was an officer; for he gave me one swift glance of fear. I, however, allayed his suspicion.

"It's all right," I said, "if you tell me the truth. Who is he?" I asked Langton. He smiled.

"Red Talman. What've you been up to?" he asked.

"Nothin'."

"I brought him here to have his wound dressed, and he's going directly. I have promised him."

He nodded.

"Coll McSheen put him on to a little job and he bungled it, that's all."

Langton actually looked pleased; but I could not tell whether it was because his warning had been verified or because I had escaped.

"'T was that other skunk," muttered Talman sullenly.

"Who? Dutch?"

The footpad coughed. "Don' know who 't was."

"You don't? You don't know who I am either?"

The man gave him a keen look of inspection, but he evidently did not know him. Langton leaned over and dropped his voice. "Did you ever know—?" I could not catch the name. But the thug's eyes popped and he turned white under his dirt.

"I didn't have nothin' 't all to do with it. I was in Canady," he faltered.

Langton's eyes suddenly snapped. "I know where you were. This gentleman's a friend of mine," he said. "He saved my life once, and if you ever touch him, I'll have you—" He made a gesture with his hand to his throat. "Understand? And not all the bosses in the city will save you. Understand?"

"I ain't goin' to touch him. I got nothin' against him."

"You'd better not have," said Langton, implacably. "Come here." He took him out into the doctor's front office and talked to him for some little time while I told the doctor of my adventure.

"Who is Langton when he is at home?" I asked him.

He chuckled. "He is the best man for you to have

in this city if Coll McSheen is your enemy. He is a retainer of Mr. Leigh's."

Just then Langton and the thug came in.

"Say, I'm sorry I took a hand in that job," said the latter. "But that skunk that runned away, he put 't up, and he said 's another friend of his got him to do it."

"Coll McSheen?"

"I don't know who 't was," he persisted.

I glanced at Langton, and he just nodded.

"Good-by. If ever you wants a job done——"

"Get out," said Langton.

"Don't you give 't to that other skunk. I didn't know. Good-by. Obliged to you." And he passed through the door which Langton held open for him.

"It's all right," said the latter as he closed the door. "You had a close graze—that's one of the worst criminals in the country. He don't generally bungle a job. But he's all right now. But there are others."

"My dog saved my life—he got his throat."

"That's a good dog. Better keep him close to you for a while."

XXVII

THE SHADOW

A great factory with the machinery all working and revolving with absolute and rhythmic regularity and with the men all driven by one impulse and moving in unison as though a constituent part of the mighty machine, is one of the most inspiring examples of directed force that the world shows. I have rarely seen the face of a mechanic in the act of creation which was not fine, never one which was not earnest and impressive.

Such were the men, some hundreds of them, whom I used to gaze at and admire and envy through the open windows of several great factories and mills along the street through which lay my way to my office. I chose this street for the pleasure of seeing them of a morning, as with bared and brawny arms and chests and shining brows, eager and earnest and bold, they bent over glowing fires and flaming furnaces and rolled massive red-hot irons hither and yon, tossing them about, guiding them in their rush and swing and whirl, as though they were very sons of Vulcan, and ever with a catch of song or a jest, though a swerve of the fraction of an inch might mean death itself.

I had come to know some of them well, that is, as well as a man in a good coat can know men in a workman's blouse, and numbers of them I began to know

in a sort, as day after day I fell in beside them on their way to or from their work; for, lawyer and gentleman as I was, they, I think, felt in me the universal touch of brotherhood. We used to talk together, and I found them human to the core and most intelligent. Wolffert was an idol among them. They looked to him as to a champion.

"He has learned," said one of them to me once, "the secret of getting at us. He takes us man for man and don't herd us like cattle. He speaks to me on a level, man to man, and don't patronize me."

He was a strong-visaged, clear-eyed Teuton with a foreign accent.

"We haf our own home," he said with pride, "and the building company is 'most off my back. If we can but keep at vork we'll soon be safe, and the young ones are all at school. The sun shines bright after the storm," he added with a shake of his strong head.

"Ah, well, we are having good times now. The sun is shining for many of us. Let us pray that it may keep shining."

"God grant it," he said, solemnly.

I was thinking of Miss Eleanor Leigh and the way she had smiled the last time Heaven had favored me with a sight of her. That was sunshine enough for me. She had heard of the attack on me and had been so sympathetic that I had almost courted her again on the spot. John Marvel had made me out quite a hero.

The good times, however, of which my mill-friends and I talked were rapidly passing. In Coll McSheen's

offices plans were being laid which were to blot out the sun for many a poor family.

Within a day or two I began to observe in the press ominous notices of an approaching strike. All the signs, it was declared, pointed to it. Meetings were being held, and the men were rapidly getting out of hand of their conservative leaders, who, it being on the verge of winter, were averse to their undertaking the strike at this time, notwithstanding what they admitted were their undoubted and long-standing grievances. As I ran over the accounts in many of the papers I was surprised to find that among these "conservatives" was mentioned the name of Wringman. It was evident, however, that the efforts of the conservative element were meeting with success; for in the workingmen's section through which I passed every day there was not as yet the least sign of excitement of any kind, or, indeed, of any dissatisfaction. The railway men all appeared quiet and contented, and the force in the several large factories along my route whom I mingled with in my tramp back and forth from my office were not only free from moroseness, but were easy and happy. The only strikes going on in the city were those on the lines in which the Argand interests were, and they were frequently spoken of as "chronic."

The mills were all running as usual; work was going on; but a shadow was deepening over the community of the operatives. The strike which the newspapers had been prophesying for some time was decreed—not yet, indeed, by the proper authorities; but it was de-

termined on by the leaders, and its shadow was darkening the entire section. The first knowledge I had of it was the gloom that appeared on the countenances of the men I saw in the morning. And when I met Wolffert he was more downcast than I had seen him in a long time. He had been working night and day to stave off the trouble.

"The poor fools!" was all he could say. "They are the victims of their ignorance."

From my earliest arrival in the city I had been aware of something about the laboring element—something connected with the Union, yet different from what I had been accustomed to elsewhere. I had ever been an advocate of the union of workingmen to protect themselves against the tyranny and insolence of those who, possibly by fortuitous circumstances, were their employers. I had seen the evil of the uncurbed insolence added to the unlimited power of the boss to take on or to fling off whom he pleased and, while the occupation lasted, to give or reduce wages as he pleased. And I had seen the tyrannous exercise of this power—had seen men turned off for nothing but the whim of a superior; had seen them hacked about; ordered around as if they had been beasts of burden, and if they ever murmured, told to go elsewhere, as though a poor man with a family of children could "go elsewhere" at an hour's notice; hundreds of men, thousands of men "laid off," because, it was said, "times were dull," though the returns from their work in good times had made their employers rich beyond anything their fathers

had ever dreamed of. And I had witnessed with that joy that a man feels in seeing justice meted out, the rise of a power able to exact, if not complete, at least, measurable justice for the down-trodden.

But here was something different. It was still the Union; but bore a new complexion and a different relation alike to the workingman, the employer, and the public. It was a strange power and its manifestation was different. It was not in active exercise when I first went among the workingmen. Yet it was ever present. A cloud appeared to hang over the population; there was a feeling that a volcano, as yet quiet, might burst forth at any time, and no man could tell what the end might be. It was ever in men's minds, not only the workingmen's, but the tradesmen's, the middlemen's. It appeared to keep on edge a keen antagonism between all laboring men as such and all other men. It was nearer and more important than politics or religion. It had entered into their lives and created a power which they feared and obeyed. To a considerable extent it had taken away their liberties, and their lives were regulated by their relation to it. I saw the growth of the system and was mystified by it, for I saw individuality and personal liberty passing away—men deliberately abandoning their most cherished privileges to submit to a yoke that was being put on them. I noted the decline of excellence in the individual's work and of ambition for excellence in himself —the decay of the standard of good workmanship. I marked the mere commercial question of wages—

higher wages irrespective of better work—take the place of the old standard of improved workmanship and witnessed the commercialism which in large figures had swept over the employer class, now creep over and engulf the laboring class to the destruction of all fine ambition and the reduction of excellence to a dead level of indifferent mediocrity. They deliberately surrendered individual liberty and all its possibilities and became the bondmen of a tyrannous dictator which they set up.

I was familiar with the loafer and the shirker. He is incident to humanity. He exists in every calling and rank of life. But it was novel to me to find an entire class deliberately loafing and shirking and slurring on principle. I saw gangs of workmen waiting around, shivering in the wind, for the hour to come when they might take up the tools which lay at hand with which they might have warmed themselves. I saw them on the stroke, drop those tools as though the wave of sound had paralyzed their arms. I saw them leave the stone half set, the rivet half driven, the bar half turned; the work, whatever it was, half done. I saw bright, alert, intelligent men, whose bodies were twice and their brains ten times as active as their fellows', do double work in the same time as the latter and then dawdle and loaf and yawn empty-handed beside the unfinished work with which they might readily have doubled their income. I asked some of my friends why it was and the answer was always the same: "the Union."

A strike was going on on the other side of the town,

but the direct results were not yet felt among us, and as the enterprises there where the trouble existed were in conflict with those on our side, and therefore our rivals, it did not appear likely that we should be affected except possibly to our advantage. The population of our section, therefore, looked on and discussed the troubles with the placid satisfaction of men who, secure on land, discuss and commiserate those tossed by storms far off, whose existence is known only by the long surges that with spent force roll against their shore. They enjoyed their own good fortune, rejoiced in the good times, and to a considerable extent spent their earnings like children, almost indifferent as to the future.

XXVIII

THE WALKING DELEGATE

Miss Eleanor Leigh had observed for some time that her father was more than usually grave and preoccupied. She knew the cause, for her father discussed many matters with her. It was often his way of clarifying his own views. And when he asked her what she thought of them she felt that it was the highest compliment she ever received—not that he took her advice, she knew, but this did not matter; he had consulted her. The fact gave her a self-reliance wholly different from mere conceit. It steadied her and furnished her a certain atmosphere of calm in which she formed her judgment in other matters. Of late, in the shadow of the clash with his operatives, which appeared to be growing more and more imminent, he had not advised with her as formerly and the girl felt it. Was it due to the views which she had been expressing of late touching the suppression of the laboring class? She knew that her father held views as to this quite the opposite of those she had been vaguely groping toward, and while he treated her views with amused indulgence he considered the whole line of thought as the project of selfish demagogues, or, at best, of crack-brained doctrinaires. It might suit for the millennium, but not for a society in

which every man was competing with every other man. In fact, however, the principal reason for Mr. Leigh's silence was the growing differences between himself and Mrs. Argand. The struggle had grown until it involved the very existence of his house. He knew that if his daughter ever realized the truth, that her aunt's interest had been thrown against him and in favor of men whose methods he reprobated, it would mean the end of all between them, and he was unwilling that a breach should come between his daughter and her mother's sister.

The status of the present relation with his men was, however, growing steadily worse and more threatening. The influences at work were more and more apparent. The press was giving more and more space to the widening breach, and the danger of a strike on a vast scale that should exceed anything ever known heretofore was steadily increasing.

Eleanor knew that this was the cloud that left its shadow on her father's brow and she determined to make an effort to assist him. She had revolved the scheme in her little head and it appeared the very thing to do.

The approach of Thanksgiving offered an opportunity for an act of good-will which she felt sure would bear fruit. She had talked it over with John Marvel and he had glowed at the suggestion. So one day at the table she broke in on her father's reverie.

"Father, how many men have you in the mills and on the railway?"

Her father smiled as he nearly always did when she spoke to him, as, indeed, most people smiled, with sheer content over the silvery voice and sparkling eyes.

"Why, roughly, in the mills about eleven hundred—there may be a few more or a few less to-day; to-morrow there will not be one."

"Oh! I hope they won't do that. I have such a beautiful plan."

"What is it? To give them all they demand, and have them come back with a fresh and more insolent demand to-morrow?"

"No, to give them—every one who has a family, a Thanksgiving basket—a turkey."

Her father burst out laughing. "A turkey? Better give them a goose. What put that idea into your little head? Why, they would laugh at you if they did not fling it back in your face."

"Oh! no, they would not. I never saw any one who did not respond to kindness."

"Better wait till after to-morrow and you will save a lot of turkeys."

"No, I am serious. I have been thinking of it for quite a while and I have some money of my own."

"You'd better keep it. You may come to need it."

"No, I want to try my plan. You do not forbid it?"

"Oh, no! If you can avert the strike that they are preparing for, your money will be a good investment."

"I don't do it as an investment," protested the girl. "I do it as an act of kindness."

"All right, have your way. It can't do any harm. If you succeed, I shall be quite willing to foot the bills."

"No, this is my treat," said the girl, " though I shall put your name in too."

So, that day Miss Eleanor Leigh spent inspecting and getting prices on turkeys, and by night she had placed her order with a reliable man who had promised to provide the necessary number of baskets, and, what is more, had gotten interested in her plan. She had enlisted also the interest of John Marvel, who worked like a Trojan in furtherance of her wishes. And I, having learned from John of her charitable design, gave my assistance with what I fear was a less unselfish philanthropy. Happily, disease is not the only thing that is contagious. It was impossible to work shoulder to shoulder with those two and not catch something of John Marvel's spirit, not to mention the sweet contagion of Eleanor Leigh's charming enthusiasm. I learned much in that association of her cleverness and sound sterling sense as she organized her force and set them to work. And I was fortunate enough to get one of her charming smiles. It was when she said, "I want one of the best baskets for Mrs. Kenneth McNeil," and I replied, "I have already sent it." Thus, in due time, on the day before Thanksgiving Day, a score of wagons were busily at work carrying not only the turkeys ordered by Miss Leigh, as a Thanksgiving present for each family in her father's employ, but with each one a basket of other things.

It happened that that night a great meeting of the operatives was held.

It was largely attended, for though the object had not been stated in the call, it was well known that it was to consider a momentous subject; nothing less than an ultimatum on the part of the men to the Company, and this many of the men felt was the same thing with a strike. The name of David Wringman, the chief speaker, was a guaranty of this. He was a man who had forged his way to the front by sheer force, mainly sheer brute force. From a common laborer he had risen to be one of the recognized leaders in what had come to be known as the workingmen's movement. He had little or no education, and was not known to have technical training of any kind. Some said he had been a machinist; some a miner; some a carpenter. His past was, in fact, veiled in mystery. No one knew, indeed, where he came from. Some said he was Irish; some that he was Welsh; some that he was American. All that was known of him positively was that he was a man of force, with a gift of fluent speech and fierce invective, which rose at times and under certain conditions to eloquence. At least, he could sway an assemblage of workingmen, and, at need, he was not backward in using his fists, or any other weapon that came to hand. Speaking of Wringman, Wolffert once said that not the least of the misfortunes of the poor was the leaders they were forced to follow. His reputation for brute strength was quite equal to his reputation as a speaker, and stories were freely told of how, when oppo-

sition was too strong for him in a given meeting, he had come down from the platform and beaten his opponents into submission with his brawny fists. It was rumored how he had, more than once, even waylaid his rivals and done them up, but this story was generally told in undertones; for Wringman was now too potent and dangerous a man for most men of his class to offend personally without good cause. His presence in the city was in itself a sign that some action would be taken, for he had of late come to be known as an advanced promoter of aggressive action. To this bold radicalism was due much of his power. He was "not afraid of the capitalists," men said. And so they established him in his seat as their leader. To his presence was due a goodly share of the shadow that had been gathering over the workingmen's part of the section of the town which I have noted.

Thus, the meeting on the evening I speak of was largely attended. For an hour before the time set for it the large hall in the second story of a big building was crowded, and many who could not get in were thronging the stairways and the street outside. A reek of strong tobacco pervaded the air and men with sullen brows talked in undertones, broken now and then by a contentious discussion in some group in which possibly some other stimulant than tobacco played a part.

Wolffert and Marvel had both been trying to avert the strike, and had, I heard, made some impression among the people. Marvel had worked hard all day aiding Miss Leigh in her friendly efforts, and Wolffert

had been arguing on rational grounds against a strike at the beginning of winter. I had been talking over matters with some of my mill-friends who had invited me to go with them; so I attended the meeting. I had been struck for some time with the change that had been going on in the workingmen's districts. As wretched as they had been before they were now infinitely more so.

The meeting began, as the meetings of such bodies usually begin, with considerable discussion and appearance of deliberation. There was manifest much discontent and also much opposition to taking any steps that would lead to a final breach. A number of men boldly stood forth to declare for the half-a-loaf-better-than-no-bread theory, and against much hooting they stood their ground. The question of a resolution of thanks for Miss Leigh's baskets aroused a little opposition, but the majority were manifestly for it, and many pleasant things were said about her and her father as well, his liberal policy being strongly contrasted with the niggard policy of the other roads. Then there appeared the real leader of the occasion, to hear whom the meeting had been called: Wringman. And within ten minutes he had everything his own way. He was greeted with cheers as he entered, and he shouldered his way to the front with a grim look on his face that had often prepared the way for him. He was undoubtedly a man of power, physical and mental. Flinging off his heavy overcoat, he scarcely waited for the brief introduction, undertaken by the Chairman of

the occasion, and, refusing to wait for the cheers to subside, he plunged at once into the midst of his subject.

"Workingmen, why am I here? Because, like you, I am a working man." He stretched out his long arm and swept it in a half circle and they cheered his gesture and voice, and violent action, though had they considered, as they might well have done, he had not "hit a lick" with his hands in a number of years. Unless, indeed, a rumor which had begun to go the rounds was true, that he had once at least performed work for the government in an institution where the labor was not wholly voluntary.

Then came a catalogue of their grievances and wrongs, presented with much force and marked dramatic ability, and on the heels of it a tirade against all employers and capitalists, and especially against their employer, whom he pictured as their arch enemy and oppressor, the chief and final act of whose infamy, he declared to be his "attempt to bribe them with baskets of rotten fowls." Who was this man? He would tell them. He held in his hand a paper which pictured him in his true character. Here he opened a journal and read from the article I had written for Kalender—the infamous headlines of the editor which changed the whole. This was the man with whom they had to deal—a man who flung scraps from his table for famishing children to wrangle over with dogs. There was but one way to meet such insolence, he declared, to fling them back in his face and make him understand that they didn't want favors from him, but justice; not rotten fowls,

but their own hard-earned money. "And now," he cried, "I put the motion to send every basket back with this message and to demand an increase of twenty-five per cent. pay forthwith. Thus, we shall show them and all the world that we are independent American workmen earning our own bread and asking no man's meat. Let all who favor this rise and the scabs sit still.'

It was so quickly and shrewdly done that a large part of the assembly were on their feet in a second, indeed, many of them were already standing, and the protest of the objectors was lost in the wild storm of applause. Over on the far side I saw little McNeil shouting and gesticulating in vehement protest; but as I caught sight of him a dozen men piled on him and pulled him down, hammering him into silence. The man's power and boldness had accomplished what his reasoning could never have effected.

The shouts that went up showed how completely he had won. I was thrown into a sort of maze. But his next words recalled me. It was necessary, he went on, that he should still maintain his old position. His heart bled every moment; but he would sacrifice himself for them, and if need were, he would die with them; and when this time came he would lead them through flaming streets and over broken plutocrats to the universal community of everything. He drew a picture of the rapine that was to follow, which surpassed everything I had ever believed possible. When he sat down, his audience was a mob of lunatics. Insensible to the folly of the step I took, I sprang to my chair and

began to protest. They hushed down for a second. I denounced Wringman as a scoundrel, a spy, a hound. With a roar they set upon me and swept me from my feet. Why I was not killed instantly, I hardly know to this day. Fortunately, their very fury impeded them. I knew that it was necessary to keep my feet, and I fought like a demon. I could hear Wringman's voice high above the uproar harking them on. Suddenly a cry of "put him out" was raised close beside me. A pistol was brandished before my face; my assailants fell back a little, and I was seized and hustled to the door. I found a man I had noticed near me in the back part of the hall, who had sat with his coat collar turned up and his hat on, to be my principal ejector. With one hand he pushed me toward the entrance whilst, brandishing his revolver with the other, he defended me from the blows that were again aimed at me. But all the time he cursed me violently.

"Not in here; let him go outside. Leave him to me —I'll settle him!" he shouted—and the crowd shouted also. So he bundled me to the door and followed me out, pushing others back and jerking the door to after him.

On the outside I turned on him. I had been badly battered and my blood was up. I was not afraid of one man, even with a pistol. As I sprang for him, however, he began to put up his weapon, chuckled, and dropped his voice.

"Hold on—you've had a close call—get away from here."

It was Langton, the detective. He followed me down the steps and out to the street, and then joined me.

"Well?" he laughed, "what do you think of your friends?"

"That I have been a fool."

He smiled with deep satisfaction. "What were you doing in there?" I asked.

"Looking after my friends. But I don't feel it necessary to invite them to cut my throat. One good turn deserves another," he proceeded. "You keep away from there or you'll find yourself in a bad way. That Wringman——"

"Is a scoundrel."

"Keep a lookout for him. He's after you and he has powerful friends. Good night. I don't forget a man who has done me a kindness— And I know that fellow."

He turned into a by-street.

The next morning the papers contained an account of the proceedings with glaring headlines, the account in the *Trumpet* being the fullest and most sympathetic and giving a picture of the "great labor-leader, Wringman, the idol of the workingman," who had, by "his courage and character, his loftiness of purpose and singleness of aim, inspired them with courage to rise against the oppression of the grinding corporation which, after oppressing them for years, had attempted by a trick to delude them into an abandonment of the measures to secure, at least, partial justice, just as they were about to wring it from its reluctant hand."

It was a description which might have fitted an apostle of righteousness. But what sent my heart down into my boots was the republication of the inserted portion of my article on the delayed train attacking Mr. Leigh. The action of the meeting was stated to be unanimous, and in proof it was mentioned that the only man who opposed it, a young man evidently under the influence of liquor, was promptly flung out. I knew that I was destined to hear more of that confounded article, and I began to cast about as to how I should get around it. Should I go to Eleanor Leigh and make a clean breast of it, or should I leave it to occasion to determine the matter? I finally did the natural thing—I put off the decision.

Miss Eleanor Leigh, who had worked hard all the day before despatching baskets to the hundreds of homes which her kind heart had prompted her to fill with cheer, came down to breakfast that morning with her heart full of gratitude and kindness toward all the world. She found her father sitting in his place with the newspapers lying beside him in some disorder and with a curious smile on his face. She divined at once that something had happened.

"What is it?" she asked, a little frightened.

For answer Mr. Leigh pushed a paper over to her and her eye fell on the headlines:

HONEST LABORING MEN RESENT BRAZEN
ATTEMPT AT BRIBERY
LABOR LEADER'S GREAT APPEAL FOR JUSTICE
LABOR DEMANDS ITS DUES

"Oh, father!" With a gasp she burst into tears and threw herself in her father's arms.

"That is the work of Canter and his partner, McSheen," said Mr. Leigh grimly.

It was not the only house in which the sending back of her baskets caused tears. In many a poor little tenement there was sore weeping because of the order—in not a few a turkey had not been known for years. Yet mainly the order was obeyed.

Next day Mr. Leigh received in his office a notification that a deputation of the operatives on his road demanded to see him immediately. He knew that they were coming; but he had not expected them quite so soon. However, he was quite prepared for them and they were immediately admitted. They were a deputation of five men, two of them elderly men, one hardly more than a youth, the other two of middle age. At their head was a large, surly man with a new black hat and a new overcoat. He was the first man to enter the room and was manifestly the leader of the party. Mr. Leigh invited them to take seats and the two older men sat down. Two of the others shuffled a little in their places and turned their eyes on their leader.

"Well, what can I do for you?" inquired Mr. Leigh quietly. His good-humored face had suddenly taken on a cold, self-contained expression, as of a man who had passed the worst.

Again there was a slight shuffle on the part of the others and one of the older men, rising from his seat

and taking a step forward, said gravely: "We have come to submit to you——"

His speech, however, was instantly interrupted by the large man in the overcoat. "Not by a d——d sight!" he began. "We have come to demand two things——"

Mr. Leigh nodded.

"Only two? What may they be, please?"

"First, that you discharge a man named Kenneth McNeil, who is a non-union man——"

Mr. Leigh's eyes contracted slightly.

"—and secondly, that you give a raise of wages of fifteen per cent. to every man in your employ—and every woman, too."

"And what is the alternative, pray?"

"A strike."

"By whom?"

"By every soul in your employ, and, if necessary, by every man and woman who works in this city—and if that is not enough, by a tie-up that will paralyze you, and all like you."

Mr. Leigh nodded. "I understand."

A slight spark came into his eyes and his lips tightened just a shade, but when he spoke his voice was level and almost impersonal.

"Will nothing less satisfy you?" he inquired.

"Not a cent," said the leader and two of the others looked at him with admiration. "We want justice."

Mr. Leigh, with his eye steadily on him, shook his head and a smile came into his eyes. "No, you

don't want justice," he said to the leader, "you want money."

"Yes, our money."

Again Mr. Leigh shook his head slowly with his eyes on him. "No, not your money—mine. Who are you?" he demanded. "Are you one of the employees of this road?"

"My name is Wringman and I am the head of this delegation."

"Are you an employee of this Company?"

"I am the head of this delegation, the representative of the Associated Unions of this city, of which the Union on this road constitutes a part."

"I will not deal with you," said Mr. Leigh, "but I will deal with you," he turned to the other men. "I will not discharge the man you speak of. He is an exceptionally good man. I happen to know this of my own personal knowledge, and I know the reason he is not a Union man. It is because you kept him out of the Union, hoping to destroy him as you have destroyed other honest men who have opposed you." He turned back to the leader.

Wringman started to speak, but Mr. Leigh cut him short.

"Not a word from you. I am dealing now with my own men. I know you. I know who your employer is and what you have been paid. You sold out your people in the East whom you pretended to represent, and now you have come to sell out these poor people here, on whose ignorance and innocence you trade and

fatten. You have been against McNeil because he denounced you in the East. Your demand is preposterous," he said, turning to the others. "It is an absolute violation of the agreement which you entered into with me not three months ago. I have that agreement here on my desk. You know what that says, that the scale adopted was to stand for so long, and if by any chance, any question should arise, it was to be arbitrated by the tribunal assented to by yourselves and myself. I am willing to submit to that tribunal the question whether any question has arisen, and if it has, to submit it for adjudication by them."

"We did not come here to be put off with any such hyp—" began the leader, but before he had gotten his word out, Mr. Leigh was on his feet.

"Stop," he said. And his voice had the sharp crack of a rifle shot. "Not a word from you. Out of this office." He pointed to the door and at the same moment touched the bell. "Show that man the door," he said, "instantly, and never admit him inside of it again."

"Ah, I'm going," sneered Wringman, putting on his hat, "but not because you ordered me."

"Yes, you are—because I ordered you, and if you don't go instantly I will kick you out personally."

He stepped around the desk and, with his eyes blazing, walked quickly across the floor, but Wringman had backed out of the door.

"For the rest of you," he said, "you have my answer. I warn you that if you strike you will close the factories that now give employment to thousands of men and

young women. You men may be able to take care of yourselves; but you should think of those girls. Who will take care of them when they are turned out on the street? I have done it heretofore—unless you are prepared to do it now, you had better consider. Go down to my box-factory and walk through it and see them, self-supporting and self-respecting. Do you know what will become of them if they are turned out? Go to Gallagin's Gallery and see. Go back to your work if you are men of sense. If not, I have nothing further to say to you."

They walked out and Mr. Leigh shut the door behind them. When he took his seat a deep gravity had settled on him which made him look older by years.

The following day an order for a general strike on the lines operated by Mr. Leigh was issued, and the next morning after that not a wheel turned on his lines or in his factories. It was imagined and reported as only a question of wages between an employer and his men. But deep down underneath lay the secret motives of McSheen and Canter and their set who had been plotting in secret, weaving their webs in the dark—gambling in the lives of men and sad-eyed women and hungry children. The effect on the population of that section of the city was curious. Of all sad things on earth a strike is the saddest. And like other battles, next to a defeat the saddest scene is the field of victory.

The shadow had settled down on us; the sunshine was gone. The temper of every one appeared to have been strained. The principle of Unionism as a system

of protection and defence had suddenly taken form as a system of aggression and active hostility. Class-feeling suddenly sprang up in open and armed array, and next came division within classes. The talk was all of force; the feeling all one of enmity and strife. The entire population appeared infected by it. Houses were divided against themselves; neighbors who had lived in friendliness and hourly intercourse and exchanged continual acts of kindness, discussed, contended, quarrelled, threatened, and fought or passed by on the other side scowling and embittered. Sweetness gave place to rancor and good-will to hate.

Among those affected by the strike was the family of my old drummer. The change was as apparent in this little home, where hitherto peace and content had reigned supreme with Music to fill in the intervals and make joy, as in the immediate field of the strike.

The whole atmosphere of happiness underwent a change, as though a deadly damp had crept in from the outside, mildewing with its baleful presence all within, and turning the very sunlight into gloom. Elsa had lost her place. The box-factory was closed. The house was filled with contention. The musicians who came around to smoke their big pipes and drink beer with old Loewen were like the rest, infected. Nothing appeared to please any longer. The director was a tyrant; the first violin a charlatan; the rest of the performers mostly fools or worse; and the whole orchestra "a fake."

This was the talk I heard in the home when I stopped by sometimes of an evening on my way to my room, and found some of his friends arguing with him over their steins and pipes, and urging a stand against the director and a demand that he accede to their wishes. The old drummer himself stood out stoutly. The director had always been kind to him and to them, he insisted. He was a good man and took pride in the orchestra, as much pride as he himself did. But I could see that he was growing soured. He drank more beer and practised less. Moreover, he talked more of money, which once he had scarcely ever mentioned. But the atmosphere was telling; the mildew was appearing. And in this haunt of peace, peace was gone.

I learned from Loewen one evening that in the event of the strike not being settled soon, there was a chance of a sympathetic strike of all trades, and that even the musicians might join in it, for they had "grievances also."

"But I thought Music was not a trade, but a profession, an art?" I said, quoting a phrase I had overheard him use. He raised his shoulders and threw out his hands palm upward.

"Ach! it vas vonce."

"Then why is it not now?"

"Ach! Who knows? Because they vill not haf it so. Ze music iss dead—ze harmony iss all gone—in ze people—in ze heart! Zere iss no more music in ze souls of ze people. It iss monee—monee—monee—

fight, fight, fight, all ze time! Who can gife ze divine strain ven ze heart is set on monee always?"

Who, indeed? I thought, and the more I thought of it the more clearly I felt that he had touched the central truth.

XXIX

MY CONFESSION

It is said that every woman has in her nature something feline. I will not venture on so sweeping an assertion; but I will say that one of the sex was never excelled by any feline in her ability to torture and her willingness to tease the victim of her charms.

When I met Eleanor Leigh next after the memorable session on the dusty steps, I could not tell for my life what were her feelings toward me. They were as completely veiled as though she had been accustomed from her infancy to enfold herself in impenetrable mystery. There was a subtle change in her manner profoundly interesting to me, but what it denoted I could not in the least discover, and every effort on my part to do so was frustrated with consummate art. She did not look at me and at moments appeared oblivious of my presence. She talked more than ever before of John Marvel, varied at times by admiring allusions to Leo Wolffert, until I almost began to hate them both. And all the while, she was so exasperatingly natural and innocent. A man may be a true friend to another, ready to serve him to the limit and may wish him all the happiness in the world, and yet may not desire the girl who has become his sun, moon and stars to appear to draw her light from his source. So, presently, like any other worm, I turned.

"You appear to think that there is no one else in the world like John Marvel!" I said, fuming inwardly.

"I do not. In a way, he stands by himself. Why, I thought you thought so too?"

"Yes, of course—I do—I mean—I believe you are in—" I hesitated to finish the sentence, and changed it. "I believe you think more of him than of any one else." I did not really believe this—I wished her to deny it; but not she! I was playing at a game at which she was an expert from her cradle. A subtle change of expression passed over her face. She gave me a half glance, and then looked down. She appeared to be reflecting and as my eyes rested on her I became conscious of the same feeling of pleased wonder with which we gaze into a perfectly clear fountain whose crystal depths we may penetrate, but not fathom.

"Yes, I think I do, in a way—I think him—quite wonderful. He appears to me the embodiment of truth—rugged and without grace—but so restful—so real—so sincere. I feel that if any great convulsion of Nature should occur and everything should be overthrown, as soon as we emerged we should find Mr. Marvel there unchanged—like Truth itself, unchangeable. If ever I marry, it will be to some man like that—simple and strong and direct always—a rock." She gazed placidly down while this arrow quivered in my heart. I wanted to say, "Why, then, don't you marry him?" But we were already too perilously near the edge for me to push matters further in that direction. I wished also to say, "Why don't you marry me?" but

I was not conscious at the moment of any remarkable resemblance to a rock of strength.

I recall her exact appearance as she waited. She happened to be arrayed that afternoon in a dark red dress, which fitted perfectly her slim, supple form, and her hat with a dark feather, and her dark hair about her brow gave her an air which reminded me of a red rose. It is not, however, the tint that makes the rose, but the rose itself. The rose is a rose, whether its petals be red or pink or white. And such she ever appeared to me. And the thorns that I found about her in no way detracted from her charms. Though I might have wished her less prone to show them, I did not find her pursuit the less delicious.

Just after this I decided to move my quarters. Pushkin was beginning to come again to the old Drummer's house, I did not know why—and though I did not meet him I could not bear to be under the same roof with him. I began to feel, too, the change in the household. Elsa had begun to change somehow. Instead of the little carols and snatches like bird-songs that I used to hear before she went to her work, or in the evening when she returned, there was silence and sometimes sighs, and in place of smiles, gloom. Her face lost its bloom. I wondered what the poor thing was distressing herself about. My young Swede, too, whom I still occasionally saw, appeared to have lost that breezy freshness and glow which always reminded me of country meadows and upland hay-fields, and looked downcast and moody. In place of his good-

humored smile, his ruddy face began to wear a glowering, sullen look; and finally he disappeared. The mother, also, changed, and her voice, formerly so cheery and pleasant, had a sharper tone than I had ever heard in it before, and even the old drummer wore a cloudier air, wholly different from his old-time cheeriness. In fact, the whole house had changed from the nest of content that it had been, and I began to plan moving to a better neighborhood which my improving practice appeared to justify. The chief thing that withheld me was that radiant glimpse of Miss Leigh which I sometimes got of a morning as she came tripping along the street with her little basket in her hand, and her face sweet with high thoughts. It set me up all day; attended me to my office, and filled it with sunshine and hope. Moreover, I was beginning to find in my association with John Marvel a certain something which I felt I should miss. He calmed me and gave me resolution. It appeared strange that one whom I had always looked down on should so affect me, but I could no longer hide it from myself. But against this reason for remaining I set the improvement in my condition that a better lodging-place would indicate. After a time, my broad-shouldered young Swedish car-driver came back and I was glad I had remained. Several times in the evening I found him in the house dressed up with shiny hair, a very bright necktie, and a black coat, the picture of embarrassed happiness, and Elsa sitting up and looking prim and, I fancied, a trifle bored, though it might have been

only demureness. When I heard her singing again, I assumed that it was the latter expression, and not the former, which I had observed. However, I came in one night and heard Pushkin's voice in the house and I was again at sea. Elsa in all the gayety of her best frock and ribbons, dashed by me as I mounted the stair to my room.

The next evening I was walking home late. I came on two persons standing in the shadow in a secluded spot. They stopped talking as I passed and I thought I heard my name whispered. I turned and they were Elsa and Pushkin. What was he doing talking with her at that hour? I came near walking up and denouncing him then and there; but I reflected and went on, and when, a few minutes later, Elsa came in very red and scared-looking, I congratulated myself on my self-restraint and sagacity. The next morning was rainy and black, and I took a street car; and found that the motorman was my blue-eyed young Swede, and that he was as dark and cloudy that morning as the day.

That night, I heard Pushkin's voice in the house again, and my old friend's reply to him in a tone of expostulation. It was hard not to hear what Pushkin said, for the house was like a sounding-board. Pushkin was actually trying to borrow money—"more money," and he gave as his reason the absolute certainty that with this stake—"just this one loan," he should win an heiress—"One of the richest women in all the land," he said. He urged as a reason why the old fellow should lend it to him, that they were both from the same

country, and that his grandfather, when a Minister of the Court, had appreciated Loewen's music and helped him to get his first place.

"And he was a shentlemans like me, and you nodings but a common trummer, hey? And—look here," he said, "I am going to marry a great heiress, and then I shall not haf to borrow any more. I shall haf all de moneys I want—my pockets full, and den I vill pay you one—two—t'ree times for all you haf lend me, hein? And now I, de shentlemans, comes to you, de common trummer, and calls you mine friend, and swear to pay you one—two—t'ree times over, certainlee you vill nod refuse me?"

The rest was in the language of their own country. The argument had its effect; for I could hear the old drummer's tone growing more and more acquiescent and the other's laugh becoming more and more assured, and finally I knew by his voice that he had succeeded.

I came near rising on the spot and going in and unmasking him. But I did not. I determined to wait until the next morning.

Next morning, however, when I came down I received notice that my room was no longer for rent. The announcement came to me from Mrs. Loewen, who gave it in her husband's name, and appeared somewhat embarrassed. I could not see her husband. He had gone out "to meet a gentleman," she said. Her manner was so changed that I was offended, and contented myself with saying I would leave immediately; and I did so, only leaving a line addressed to my old drummer to

explain my departure—I was sure that their action was in some way due to Pushkin. In fact, I was not sorry to leave though I did not like being put out. My only cause of regret was that I should miss my walk through the street where the young school-mistress was shining. I am not sure whether it was a high motive or a mean one which made me, as I left the house, say to Mrs. Loewen:

"You are harboring a scoundrel in that man Pushkin. Keep your eyes open." I saw a startled look in her eyes, but I did not wait to explain.

I did not feel comfortable that evening as I walked through the streets to the better quarters which I had taken. I knew that John Marvel would have said less or more. I half made up my mind to go to John and lay the matter before him. Indeed, I actually determined to do so. Other things, however, soon engrossed my thoughts and my time. I had to file my bill for my old ladies. And so this, like most of my good intentions, faded away.

In fact, about this time I was so wholly taken up with my love for the entrancing ideal that I had clad in the lineaments of Miss Eleanor Leigh and adorned with her radiance and charm that I had no thought for anything that was not in some way related to her. My work was suddenly uplifted by becoming a means to bring me nearer to my ambition to win her. My reading took on new meaning in storing my mind with lore or equipping it to fit it for her service; the outward form of nature displayed new beauty because she loved it. The

inward realm of reflection took on new grace because she pervaded it. In a word, the whole world became but the home and enshrinement of one being, about whom breathed all the radiance and sweetness that I found in it. All of which meant simply that I was truly in love. Content with my love, I lived in a Heaven whose charm she created. But Love has its winter and it often follows close on its spring. I had played Fate again and waylaid her one afternoon as she was returning home from an excursion somewhere, and persuaded her to prolong her walk with an ease that lifted me quite out of myself, and I began to have aspirations to be very brave and good. I wished to be more like a rock, rugged and simple.

We were walking slowly and had reached a park, and I guilefully led her by a roundabout path through a part where the shrubbery made it more secluded than the rest. I can see the spot now as then I saw it: a curving gray road sloping down under overhanging trees, and a path dappled with sunlight dipping into masses of shrubbery with a thrush glancing through them, like a little brown sprite playing hide-and-seek. As we neared a seat, I suggested that we should sit down and I was pleased at the way in which she yielded; quite as if she had thought of it herself. It was almost the first time that I had her quite to myself in fair surroundings where we were face to face in body and soul. I felt, somehow, as though I had made a great step up to a new and a higher level. We had reached together a new resting-place, a higher atmosphere; almost a new

land. And the surroundings were fresh to me in the city, for we had strayed out of the beaten track. I remember that a placid pool, shaded by drooping willows and one great sycamore, lay at our feet, on which a couple of half-domesticated wild-fowl floated, their graceful forms reflected in the mirror below them. I pointed to one and said, "Alcyone," and my heart warmed when she smiled and said, "Yes, at peace. 'The past unsighed for, and the future sure.'"

A quotation from a poet always pleases me. It is as if one found a fresh rose in the street, and where it comes from the lips and heart of a girl it is as though she had uttered a rose.

"Are you fond of Wordsworth?" I asked. "He seems to me very spiritual."

"Yes. In fact, I think I am fond of all poetry. It lifts me up out of the grosser atmosphere of the world, which I enjoy, too, tremendously—and seems to place me above and outside of myself. Some, even, that I don't understand. I seem to be borne on wings that I can't see into a rarer atmosphere that I can only feel, but not describe."

"That," I said, "as I understand it, is the province of poetry—and also, perhaps, its test."

"It has somewhat the same effect on me that saying my prayers has. I believe in something infinitely good and pure and blessed. It soothes me. I get into a better frame of mind."

"I should think your frame of mind was always 'a better frame,'" I said, edging toward the personal

compliment and yet feeling as though I were endangering a beautiful dream.

"Oh! you don't know how worse I can be—how angry—how savage."

"Terribly so, I should think. You look like an ogress."

"I feel like one sometimes, too," she nodded. "I can be one when I have the provocation."

"As—for example?"

"Well, let me see?—Well,—for example, once—oh! quite a time ago—it was just after I met you—the very next day— (My heart bounded that she could remember the very next day after meeting me—and should set dates by that important event. I wanted to say, that is the beginning of my era; but I feared)—"I got into a dreadful passion—I was really ferocious."

"Terrible," I jested. "I suppose you would have poisoned your slaves, like the old Roman Empress—What was her name?"

"I was angry enough."

"And, instead, you gave the cat milk in place of cream, or did some such awful act of cruelty."

"Not at all. I did nothing. I only burned inwardly and consumed myself."

"And pray, what was the offence that called forth such wrath, and who was the wretch who committed the crime?"

"I had sufficient provocation."

"Of course."

"No, I mean really——"

"What?"

"Why, it was a piece that appeared in one of the morning papers, a vile scurrilous sheet that had always attacked my father covertly; but this was the first open attack, and it was simply a huge lie. And it has been repeated again and again. Why, only the other day the same paper republished it with huge headlines and charged that my father was the cause of all the trouble in the city—my father, who is the best, the kindest, the most charitable man I ever knew—who has almost beggared himself trying to furnish facilities to the poor! Oh, I can't bear it! I wish I had that man under my heel this minute! I would just grind him to powder! I would!" She turned, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks glowing with fervor, her face rigid with resolution, her white teeth shut together as if they were a trap to hold her enemy till death. "Give the cat milk! I could have poured molten metal down that man's throat—cheerfully—yes, cheerfully."

It may be well believed that as she proceeded, the amusement died out of my face and mind. I turned the other way to keep her from seeing the change that must have come over me. I was thinking hard and I thought quickly, as, 'tis said, a drowning man thinks. Life and death both flashed before me—life in her presence, in the sunlight of those last weeks, and the shadow of perpetual banishment. But one thing was certain. I must act and at once. I turned to her and was almost driven from my determination by the smile in her eyes,

the April sunlight after the brief storm. But I seized myself and took the leap.

"I wrote that piece."

She actually laughed.

"Yes, I know you did."

"I did—seriously, I wrote it; but——"

I saw the horror oversweep her face. It blanched suddenly, like the pallor on a pool when a swift cloud covers the sun, and her hand went up to her bosom with a sudden gesture as of pain.

"Oh!" she gasped. The next second she sprang up and sped away like a frightened deer.

I sprang up to follow her, to make my explanation to her; but though, after the first twenty steps, she stopped running and came down to a walk, it was still a rapid walk, and she was fleeing from me. I felt as though the gates of Paradise were closing on me. I followed her at a distance to see that she reached home safely, and with a vain hope that she might slacken her gait and so give me an excuse to make such explanation as I could. She, however, kept on, and soon after she passed beyond the park I saw a trap draw up beside the pavement, and, after a moment in which the driver was talking to her, a young man sprang out and throwing the reins to a groom, joined her and walked on with her. In the light of the street lamp I recognized young Canter. I turned back cursing him; but most of all, cursing myself.

It has been well observed that there is no more valuable asset which a young man can possess than a

broken heart. In the ensuing weeks I bore about with me if not a broken, at least a very much bruised and wounded one. It is a tragic fact in the course of mortality that a slip of a girl should have the power to shut the gates of happiness on a man. There were times when I rebelled against myself at being as big a fool as I knew myself to be, and endeavored to console myself by reverting to those wise bits of philosophy which our friends are always offering to us in our distress from their vantage ground of serene indifference. There were doubtless as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, but I was not after fishing—somehow I could not get a grasp on the idea that there were as lovely and attractive girls in the world whom I was likely to meet as Eleanor Leigh, whom I now felt I had lost and might possibly never recover.

I walked the streets for some time that evening in a very low state of mind, and Dix, as he trudged solemnly along with his head now against my leg, now a step in the rear, must have wondered what had befallen me. By midnight he looked as dejected as I felt. Even when at length, having formulated my letter, I took him out for a run, he did not cheer up as he usually did. That dog was very near a human being. He sometimes appeared to know just what went on in my mind. He looked so confoundedly sorry for me that night that I found it a real consolation. He had the heart of a woman and the eyes of an angel. The letter I wrote was one of the best pieces of advocacy I ever did. I set forth the facts simply and yet clearly and, I felt, strongly.

I told the plain truth about the paper, and I had the sense not to truckle, even while I expressed my regret that my work had been made the basis of the unauthorized and outrageous attack on her father and the lie about herself. With regard to the rights of the public and the arrogance of the class that ran the railways and other quasi-public corporations, I stood to my guns.

This letter I mailed and awaited, with what patience I could command, her reply. Several days passed before I received any reply, and then I got a short, little cool note saying that she was glad to see that I felt an apology was due to her honored father, and was happy to know that I was not the author of the outrageous headlines. It was an icy little reply to a letter in which I had put my whole heart and I was in a rage over it. I made up my mind that I would show her that I was not to be treated so. If this was the way in which she received a gentleman's full and frank amende, why, I would have no more to do with her. Anger is a masterful passion. So long as it holds sway no other inmate of the mind can enter. So long as I was angry I got on very well. I enjoyed the society of my friends and was much gayer to outward appearances than usual. I spent my evenings with Marvel and Wolffert or some of my less intimate companions, treated myself and them to the theatre, and made altogether a brave feint at bravery. But my anger died out. I was deeply in love and I fell back into a slough of despond. I thought often of confiding in John Marvel; but for some reason I could not bring myself to do so.

Adam driven suddenly out of Paradise with Eve left behind to the temptation of the serpent will give some idea of what I felt. I had the consolation of knowing that I had done the right thing and the only thing a gentleman could have done; but it was a poor consolation when I looked back on the happiness I had been having of late in the presence of Eleanor Leigh. And now between her and me was the flaming sword which turned every way.

My heart gave a sudden drop into my boots one evening when I came across an item in the society columns of an afternoon paper, stating that it was believed by the friends of the parties, that Mr. Canter would, before very long, lead to the altar one of the reigning belles of the city. I had always disliked "Society Columns," as the expression of a latter-day vulgarity. Since then I have detested them.

I finally determined to try to get an interview with her whose absence clouded my world, and wrote her a note rather demanding one. As I received no reply to this, I called one evening to see her, if possible. The servant took in my card and a moment later returned with the statement that Miss Leigh was not at home. I was sure that it was not true. I came down the steps white with rage and also with a sinking of the heart. For I felt that it was all over between us.

Those whom the Gods hate they first make mad, and it was by no accident that the passion of anger and the state of madness have come to be known by the same terms in our tongue. I have always held since then

that every true lover has something of madness in him while the passion rages. I could cheerfully have stormed her house and carried Eleanor Leigh away. I recalled with grim envy William the Conqueror's savage wooing when he met the Count's daughter who had insulted him and rode her down, to receive soon afterward her full submission. This somewhat barbarous form of proving one's passion having passed out of vogue, I testified my spleen by falling into a state of general cynicism which I vented so generously that Wolffert finally asked me what had happened to me, and conjectured that I must have met with a cross in love. This recalled me sufficiently to myself to make me dissemble my feelings, at least when in his presence. But I was certainly not rational for some time, and, sleeping or waking, I was haunted by the voice of the siren to whom I had fatally listened. What must I do in my folly the next time I met Miss Leigh, which I did quite accidentally one day on the street, but carry my head so high and bow so slightly that the next time we met, which was far from being as accidental as it might have appeared, she carried her head very high and did not bow at all. It was at some sort of a fair held for charity—and, ever since then I have hated them. Feeling assured that Eleanor Leigh would go, I attended myself with no more charitable object than to benefit a very wretched young lawyer, who was deeply conscious that he had made a fool of himself the last time he saw her. When I arrived, she was nowhere to be seen and I was on the point of leaving when, turning, I found her

standing in the midst of a group, her arms full of flowers, which she was selling. All I have to say is that since that time I have felt that Pluto was entirely justified in that little affair in the Sicilian meadows. Thinking to make the amende for my foolish airiness when I last saw her, I made my way up to Miss Eleanor Leigh; but as I approached and was in the very act of speaking to her she turned her back on me. It was a dead cut—a public insult, as humiliating as she could make it. I left the fair in a rage which lasted long. As I wandered through the forlorn streets that night I fed my heart on instances of woman's inconstancy, and agreed with the royal lover that, "Mal habil qui s'y fie." But it was a poor occupation and brought me little consolation. In his "Inferno," Dante has given twelve different and successive circles in the depths of perdition, each lower than the other. I passed through every one of them, and with no companion but my own folly.

XXX

SEEKING ONE THAT WAS LOST

One may not hate his personal enemy; but one should hate an enemy to mankind. Had I known what fresh cause I had to hate Pushkin, I should not have been so supine.

Since I began to work seriously my practice had increased, and I was so interested in working on my old ladies' case that I was often detained at my office until late at night; and several times on my way home I observed a man acting somewhat curiously. He would keep along behind me, and if I turned back, would turn up a by-street or alley. He was a big, brawny fellow, and I never saw him except at night. At first, it had made no impression on me; but at length, I noticed him so often that it suddenly struck me that he was following me. Rendered suspicious by my former experience, I began quietly to test him, and was having a very interesting time leading him around the town, when unexpectedly I discovered who he was. It was a singular feeling to find oneself shadowed; to discover that the man who has passed all others indifferently in the crowd has singled you out and follows you, bound to you by some invisible thread, tracking you through the labyrinth of the thoroughfares; disregarding all the thousands who pass with their manifold interests and affairs,

and that, singling you out with no known reason, he sticks to you through all the mazes of the multitudes. It comes to you gradually, dawning by degrees; then bursts on you suddenly with a light that astonishes and amazes. You are startled, frightened, incredulous; then you suspect, test, and are convinced; you suddenly spring from obscurity and indifference into an object of interest to yourself; and then it becomes an intellectual game between hunter and hunted. New powers awaken, dormant since the days when man lived in the forest.

When I awoke to the fact that the big man I had noticed was following me, for a moment the sensation was anything but pleasant. My hair almost stirred on my head. The next moment anger took the place of this feeling—indignation that one should dare to shadow me, to spy on my actions. I determined to confront the spy and thwart him. It was not difficult to do; he was an awkward fellow. The game was easier than I had supposed. One night when I had observed him following me, waiting until I reached a favorable spot, I turned quickly with my hand on my pistol, which I had put in my pocket, and faced him under a street lamp, stepping immediately in front of him and blocking his way.

"Otto!"

With a growl he pulled his hat down closer over his brow and, stepping aside, passed on. I went home in a maze. Why should he follow me? I had not long to wait before I was enlightened.

One evening shortly afterward I was about to leave my office when there was a heavy step outside the door, and without a knock the door flew open, and the old Drummer entered. He looked so haggard and broken that I was on my feet in a second.

"What is the matter?" I gasped. "Is any one dead?"

"Vorser! Elsa?—Vere iss Elsa?" He stood before me like a wounded bison at bay, his eyes red with passion.

"Elsa! What!—'Where is she?' Tell me——?'

"Fhat haf you done vit my daughter?"

"Your daughter! What do you mean?" I asked quietly. "I have not seen her since I left your house. Tell me what has occurred."

He soon saw that I knew nothing of her, and his face changed. Yet he hesitated.

"Ze Count said—" He began hesitatingly and stopped, thinking over something in his mind.

It all came to me in a second. That scoundrel! It was all accounted for now—the change in the family toward me—the notice to leave—the spying of Otto. Count Pushkin had used me as a blind to cover his own wickedness. I suddenly burst out into a wrath which opened the old Drummer's eyes. What I said of Pushkin cannot be repeated. What I proceeded to do was wiser. Why had I not pitched him out of the window that first evening, and so have ended his wicked career! I felt as if I were the cause of my friend's wretchedness; of Elsa's destruction. I sat the old fellow down in a chair, and made him tell me all the facts.

He informed me that for some time past he and her mother had noticed that Elsa had not been the same to Otto, and Otto had been unhappy, and had thrown up his place; then she had wished to break with him; but they would not let her. And of late she had been staying out a good deal, visiting her friends, she said, and when they urged her to marry Otto, she had always begged off, and Otto was wretched, and they were all wretched. Count Pushkin had intimated that she was in love with me, and that I was the cause of her action. They could not believe it.

"Yet, ze Count—?" The old fellow was not able to go on. I relieved him and he took up the thread elsewhere, and told of Otto's following me to find out. And two or three nights before there had been trouble; she had come in late, and her mother had scolded her, and insisted on knowing where she had been, and she had told her a lie—and they had insisted on her carrying out her agreement with Otto, to which she assented. And this morning she was missing.

The old fellow broke down again. His grief was almost more for Otto than for himself. "He iss a good boy; he iss a good boy," he repeated again and again.

"Maybe, we were too harsh with her, sir, and now she may be dead." He was overcome by grief.

I did not believe she was dead; but I feared for her a worse fate. He still did not suspect Pushkin. The Count was his friend, he said; he had known him since his boyhood.

"I will find her," I said. And I knew I should if I had to choke the truth out of Pushkin's throat.

"If you do, I vill bless you, and her mother vill, too!"

I told him to go home and console her mother.

"She has gone to see the preacher. He will know how to console her—and he will help her also."

"Why do you not go to the police?"

"Oh! Ze police! Ze police! Efery one say 'Ze police!' Ze police vill nod do notings for me. I ham nod von Union-man. Zay haf zeir orders. Ven I hax ze police zay say, 'Don't vorry, Elsa vill come home by-m-by, ven she get readee.'"

I had heard the same thing said about the police, and recalled what I had heard McSheen say to Wringman about keeping them from interfering. But I felt that they were probably right in their views about Elsa.

I had recourse to my detective again, and gave him all the information I possessed.

"Oh! We'll find out where she is," he said, with that inscrutably placid look on his face which I had learned was the veil under which he masked both his feelings and his purposes. "You can tell her father she isn't dead." This in answer to the old man's suggestion that she had been murdered, which I had repeated. Then he added, "But there are worse things than death."

His eyes glistened and he buttoned up his coat in a way he had when there was any sharp work on hand. It always reminded me of a duellist. In a few days he had a clew to the lost girl, and justified my suspicions.

It was as I feared. Pushkin had inveigled her from her home and had taken her to a house which, if not precisely what I apprehended, was not less vile. It was one of those doubly disreputable places which, while professing to be reasonably respectable, is really more dangerous than the vilest den. The girl was possibly not actually at the place now, but had been there. Getting some suspicion of the place, she had insisted on leaving, but the woman of the house, said Langton, knew where she was.

"She is a hard one to handle. She has protection."

"Of the police?"

"Of those who control the police. She has powerful friends."

"I don't care how powerful they are, I will get that girl," I said.

I hesitated what to do. I had not wholly abandoned hope of making up my trouble with Eleanor Leigh. I did not wish my name to be mixed up in a scandal which probably would get into the papers. I determined to consult John Marvel, and I said so to Langton.

"You mean the preacher? Won't do any harm. He's straight. He's helping to hunt for her, too. I saw him just after I located her, and he had already heard."

I determined to go and see him, and told Langton to keep on following up his clew. When I went to Marvel's house, however, he was not at home. He had been away all day, since early morning, the girl who opened the door told me. I went to the police station.

Marvel had been there and made a complaint about a house, and they were going to send a man around to investigate.

He was a terrible crank, that preacher was, but all the same he was a good sort of a fellow, the officer said. Some people thought he was too meddlesome and mixed up too much with affairs that did not concern him, but for his part, he had seen him do things and go where it took a man to go. As the officer was going in a short while, I determined to accompany him, so waited an hour or so till he was detailed, and then set out. When we arrived the place, for all outward signs of evil, might have been a home for retired Sunday-school teachers—a more decent and respectable little hotel in a quiet street could not have been found in town. Only the large woman, with heightened complexion, Mrs. Snow, who, at length, appeared in answer to the summons of the solemn officer, seemed to be excited and almost agitated. She was divided between outraged modesty and righteous indignation. The former was exhibited rather toward me, the latter toward the officer. But this was all. She swore by all the Evangelists that she knew nothing of the girl, and with yet more vehemence that she would have justice for this outrage. She would "report the officer to the Captain and to his Honor the Mayor, and have the whole —th precinct fired." The officer was very apologetic. All we learned was that, "A lady had been brought there by a gentleman who said he was her husband, but she had refused to let her in. She

did not take in people she did not know." As there was nothing to incriminate her, we left with apologies.

The strongest ally a man can enlist in any cause is a clear-headed, warm-hearted woman. In all moral causes they form the golden guard of the forces that carry them through. John Marvel's absence when I called to consult him was due to his having got on the trace of Elsa. Another of my friends had also got on her trace, and while I was hesitating and thinking of my reputation, they were acting. As soon as he learned of Elsa's disappearance he consulted the wisest counsellor he knew. He went, with rare good sense, to Eleanor Leigh. He had a further reason for going to her than merely to secure her aid. He had heard my name connected with the affair, and old John had gone to set me straight with her. He did not know of the trouble at the Charity Fair, and Miss Leigh did not enlighten him. Miss Eleanor Leigh, having learned through Marvel that the Loewens were in great trouble, as soon as her school was out that day, went to the Loewens' house to learn what she could of the girl, with a view to rendering all the aid she could. A new force had been aroused in her by John Marvel. Precisely what she learned I never knew, but it was enough, with what she had gleaned elsewhere, to lead to action. What she had learned elsewhere pointed to a certain place in town as one where she might secure further information. It was not a very reputable place—in fact, it was a very disreputable place—part saloon, part dance-hall, part everything else that it ought not to have been. It was

one of the vilest dens in this city of Confusion, and the more vile because its depths were screened beneath a mass of gilding and tinsel and glitter. It lay on one of the most populous streets and, dazzling with electric lights, furnished one of the showiest places on that street. It was known as "The Gallery," an euphemism to cover a line of glaring nude figures hung on the walls, which, by an arrangement of mirrors, were multiplied indefinitely. Its ostensible owner was the same Mr. Mick Raffity, who kept the semi-respectable saloon opening on the alley at the back of the building where I had my office. Its keeper was a friend of Mr. Raffity's, by the name of Gallagin, a thin, middle-aged person with one eye, but that an eye like a gimlet, a face impervious to every expression save that which it habitually wore: a mixture of cunning and ferocity.

The place was crowded from a reasonable hour in the evening till an unreasonable hour in the morning, and many a robbery and not a few darker crimes were said to have been planned, and some perpetrated, around its marble tables.

At the side, in a narrow street, was a private entrance and stairway leading to the upper stories, over the door of which was the sign, "Ladies' Entrance." And at the rear was what was termed by Mr. Gallagin, a "Private Hotel."

Young women thronged the lower floor at all hours of the night, but no woman had ever gone in there and not come out a shade worse, if possible, than when she entered. The Salvation Army had attempted the clos-

ing of this gilded Augean Stable, but had retired baffled. Now and then a sporadic effort had been made in the press to close or reform it, but all such attempts had failed. The place was "protected." The police never found anything amiss there, or, if they did, were promptly found to have something amiss with their own record. To outward appearance it was on occasions of inspection as decorous as a meeting-house. It was shown that the place had been offered for Sunday afternoon services, and that such services had actually been held there. In fact, a Scripture-text hung on the wall on such occasions, while close at hand hung the more secular notice that "No excuse whatever would be taken if one lady or gentleman took another lady's or gentleman's hat or wrap."

This gilded saloon on the evening of the day I called on John Marvel was, if anything, more crowded than usual, and into it just as it was beginning to grow gay and the clouds of cigarette and cigar smoke were beginning to turn the upper atmosphere to a dull gray; just as the earlier hum of voices was giving place to the shrieking laughter and high screaming of half-sodden youths of both sexes, walked a young woman. She was simply dressed in a street costume, but there was that about her trim figure, erect carriage, and grave face which marked her as different from the gaudy sisterhood who frequented that resort of sin, and as she passed up through the long room she instantly attracted attention.

The wild laughter subsided, the shrieks died down,

and as if by a common impulse necks were craned to watch the newcomer, and the conversation about the tables suddenly hushed to a murmur, except where it was broken by the outbreak of some half-drunken youth.

"Who is she? What is she?" were questions asked at all tables, along with many other questions and answers, alike unprintable and incredible. The general opinion expressed was that she was a new and important addition to the soiled sisterhood, probably from some other city or some country town, and comments were freely bandied about as to her future destination and success. Among the throng, seated at one of the tables, was a large man with two bedizened young women drinking the champagne he was freely offering and tossing off himself, and the women stopped teasing him about his diamond ring, and rallied him on his attention to the newcomer, as with head up, lips compressed, eyes straight before her, and the color mounting in her cheek, she passed swiftly up the room between the tables and made her way to the magnificent bar behind which Mr. Gallagin presided, w th his one eye ever boring into the scene before him. Walking up to the bar the stranger at once addressed Mr. Gallagin.

"Are you the proprietor here?"

"Some folks says so. What can I do for yer?"

"I have come to ask if there is not a young woman here—?" She hesitated a moment, as the barkeepers all had their eyes on her and a number of youths had

come forward from the tables and were beginning to draw about her. Mr. Gallagin filled in the pause.

"Quite a number, but not one too many. In fact, there is just one vacancy, and I think you are the very peach to fill it." His discolored teeth gleamed for a second at the murmur of approval which came from the men who had drawn up to the bar.

"I came to ask," repeated the girl quietly, "if there is not a young woman here named Elsa Loewen."

The proprietor's one eye fixed itself on her with an imperturbable gaze. "Well, I don't know as there is," he drawled. "You see, there is a good many young women here, and I guess they have a good many names among 'em. But may I ask you what you want with her?"

"I want to get her and take her back to her home."

Mr. Gallagin's eye never moved from her face.

"Well, you can look around and see for yourself," he said quietly.

"No, I don't think she would be here, but have you not a sort of a hotel attached to your place?"

"Oh! Yes," drawled Mr. Gallagin. "I can furnish you a room, if you have any friends—and if you haven't a friend, I might furnish you one or two of them."

"No, I do not wish a room."

"Oh!" ejaculated the proprietor.

"I wish to see Elsa Loewen, and I have heard that she is here."

"Oh! you have, and who may be your informant?" demanded the barkeeper, coldly. "I'd like to know

what gentleman has sufficient interest in me to make me the subject of his conversation."

"I cannot give you my informant, but I have information that she is here, and I appeal to you to let me see her."

"To me? You appeal to me?" Mr. Gallagin put his hand on his thin chest and nodded toward himself.

"Yes, for her mother; her father. She is a good girl. She is their only daughter. They are distracted over her—disappearance. If you only knew how terrible it is for a young girl like that to be lured away from home where every one loves her, to be deceived, betrayed, dragged down while——"

The earnestness of her tone more than the words she uttered, and the strangeness of her appeal in that place, had impressed every one within reach of her voice, and quite a throng of men and women had left the tables and pressed forward listening to the conversation, and for the most part listening in silence, the expression on their faces being divided between wonder, sympathy, and expectancy, and a low murmur began to be audible among the women, hardened as they were. Mr. Gallagin felt that it was a crucial moment in his business. Suddenly from under the fur came the fierce claw and made a dig to strike deep.

"To hell with you, you d——d ——! I know you and your d——d sort—I know what you want, and you'll get it in one minute. Out of my place, or I'll pitch you in the gutter or into a worse hole yet!" He made a

gesture with one hand such as a cat makes with its claws out.

A big man with a hard gleam in his eye moved along the edge of the bar, his face stolid and his eyes on the newcomer, while the throng fell back suddenly and left the girl standing alone with a little space about her, her face pale, and her mouth drawn close under the unexpected assault. In another second she would, without doubt, have been thrown out of the place, or possibly borne off to that worse fate with which she had been threatened. But from the throng to her side stepped out a short, broad-shouldered man, with a sodden face.

"Speak her soft, Galley, —— —— you! You know who she is! That is the Angel of the Lost Children. Speak her soft or —— —— you! you'll have to throw me out, too." The sodden face took on suddenly a resolution that gave the rough a look of power, the broad shoulders were those of an athlete, and the steady eye was that of a man to be reckoned with—and such was "Red Talman" when aroused.

The name he had given was repeated over the throng by many, doubtless, who had not heard of her, but there were others who knew, and told of the work that Eleanor Leigh had been doing in quarters where any other woman of her class and kind had never showed her face; of help here and there; a hand lent to lift a fallen girl; of succor in some form or another when all hope appeared to be gone.

It was a strange champion who had suddenly stepped forward into the arena to protect her, but the girl felt

immediately that she was safe. She turned to her champion.

"I thank you," she said simply. "If you wish to help me, help me get hold of this poor girl whom I have come for. Ask him to let me see her, if only for one moment, and I may save her a life of misery."

The man turned to the proprietor. "Why don't you let her see the girl?" he said.

Gallagin scowled at him or winked, it could scarcely be told which. "What the —— is it to you? Why can't you keep your mouth for your own business instead of interfering with other folks? You have seen trouble enough doing that before."

"Let her see the girl."

"What business is it of yours whether I do or not?"

"Just this—that when I was away and my wife was starvin', and you never givin' her nothin', and my little gal was dyin', this here lady came there and took care of 'em—and that's what makes it my business. I don't forgit one as helped me, and you know it."

"Well, I'll tell you this, there ain't no gal of that name here. I don't know what she's talkin' about."

"Oh! Come off! Let her see the gal."

"You go up there and look for yourself," said the proprietor. "Take her with you if you want to and keep her there."

"Shut your mouth, d——n you!" said Talman. He turned to Miss Leigh.

"She ain't here, lady. He'd never let me go up there if she was there. But I'll help you find her if

"Speak her soft, Galley."

you'll tell me about her. You can go home now. I'll see you safe."

"I am not afraid," said the girl. "My carriage is not far off," and with a pleasant bow and a word of renewed supplication to the proprietor, whose eye was resting on her with a curious, malign expression, she turned and passed back through the room, with her gaze straight ahead of her, while every eye in the room was fastened on her; and just behind her walked the squatty figure of Red Talman. A few doors off a carriage waited, and as she reached the door she turned and gave him the name of the girl she was seeking, with a little account of the circumstances of her disappearance and of her reason for thinking she might be at Gallagin's place. She held out her hand to the man behind her.

"I don't know your name or what you alluded to, but if I can ever help any of your friends I shall be very glad to do what I can for them."

"My name's Talman. You've already done me a turn."

"'Talman!' 'Red—'! Are you the father of my little girl?"

"That's me."

"What I said just now I mean. If you want help, let me know, or go and see Mr. Marvel, the preacher, on the West side—you know him—and you will get it. And if you can find anything of that poor girl I shall be eternally grateful to you. Good-night."

"Good-night, ma'am."

The man watched the carriage until it had disappeared around the corner and then he returned to the saloon. He walked up to the bar, and Gallagin advanced to meet him.

"If you are lyin' to me," he said, "you better not let me know, but you better git that gal out of your place and into her home, or the first thing you know there will be a sign on that door."

The other gave a snarl.

"I am puttin' you wise," said Talman. "There's trouble brewing. That's big folks lookin' for her."

"I guess Coll McSheen is somethin' in this town still. But for him you wouldn' be walkin' around."

"But for—! He's a has-been," said Talman. "He's shot his bolt."

"You ought to know," sneered Gallagin.

"I do."

"That the reason you take no more jobs?"

"It's a good one."

"Have a drink," said Gallagin, with a sudden change of manner, and he did him the honor to lift a bottle and put it on the bar.

"I ain't drinkin'. I've got work to do."

"Who's your new owner?"

"Never mind, he's a man. Send the gal home or you'll be pulled before twenty-four hours."

"You're runnin' a Sunday-school, ain't you?"

"No, but I'm done workin' for some folks. That's all. So long. Git her out of your house if she's here. Git her out of your house."

He walked down the room, and as he passed a table the big man with the two women accosted him.

"Who's your friend?" he asked with a sneer. It was Wringman, who having finished his labors for the day in proving to famished strikers how much better off they were than formerly, was now refreshing himself in one of his favorite haunts, at his favorite occupation.

Talman stopped and looked at him quietly, then he said: "That man up there"—with his thumb over his shoulder he pointed toward the bar—"that man there has been a friend of mine in the past and he can ask me questions that I don't allow folks like you to ask me. See? I have known a man to git his neck broke by buttin' too hard into other folks' business. See?"

Wringman, with an oath, started to get out of his chair, but his companions held him down, imploring him to be quiet, and the next moment the big bouncer from the bar was standing beside the table, and after a word with him Talman made his way through the crowd and walked out of the door.

The bar-keeper beckoned to his bouncer and the two held a muttered conference at the end of the bar. "He's gittin' too big for his breeches," said the bar-keeper as he turned away. "He'll git back there if he fools with me and pretty quick too."

XXXI

JOHN MARVEL'S RAID

Had any one of the many detectives who were engaged in all sorts of work, legitimate and otherwise, in the limits of that great city, been watching among the half-sodden group of loafers and night-walkers who straggled through the side street on which opened the "Ladies' Entrance" of Mr. Gallagin's establishment along toward the morning hours, he might have seen a young woman brought from the door of the "ladies' entrance," supported by two persons, one a man and one a woman, and bodily lifted into a disreputable looking hack of the type known as a "night-hawk," while the dingy passers-by laughed among themselves and discussed how much it had taken to get the young woman as drunk as that. But there was no detective or other officer on that street at that hour, and but for the fact that a short, squatty man, nursing a grievance against an old pal of his, and turning over in his mind the unexpected kindness of a young woman and a threadbare preacher in an hour when all the rest of the world—even his pals in iniquity—appeared to have turned against him, was walking through the street with a dim idea of beginning a quarrel with the man who had deserted him, the destination of the drunken woman might never have been known. Red Talman's

heart, however, callous as it was, foul with crimes too many and black to catalogue, had one single spot into which any light or feeling could penetrate. This was the secret corner, sacred to the thought of his one child, a little girl who alone of all the world truly thought him a good man. For John Marvel, who had helped his wife and child when he lay in prison under long sentence, and had been kind to him, he entertained a kindly feeling, but for the young lady who had taken his little girl and taught her and made her happy when the taunts of other children drove her from the public school, he had more than a liking. She and John Marvel alone had treated him in late years as a man and a friend, and a dim hope began to dawn in his mind that possibly he might yet be able to save his girl from the shame of ever truly knowing what he had been.

So, when the man, with his hat over his eyes, who had helped put the young woman in the carriage, reentered the house and the drunken woman was driven off with her companion, Red Talman, after a moment of indecision, turned and followed the cab. He was not able to keep up with it, as, though the broken-kneed horses went at a slow gait, they soon outdistanced him, for he had to be on the watch for officers; but he knew the vehicle, and from the direction it took he suspected its destination. He turned and went back toward Gallagin's. When he reached the narrow, ill-lighted street, on which the side entrance opened, he slipped into the shadow at a corner and waited. An hour later the hack returned, a woman got out of it and, after a

short altercation with the driver, ran across the pavement and entered the door. As the hack turned, Red Talman slipped out of the shadow and walked up to the front wheel.

"Which way you goin'?" he asked the driver, who recognized him.

"Home," he said.

"Gimme a ride?"

"Git up." He mounted beside him and drove with him to a dirty saloon in a small street at some little distance, where he treated him and let him go. A half-hour afterward he rang the bell of the family hotel which I had visited with an officer the day before, and asked to see the woman of the house. She could not be seen, the woman said who opened the door.

"Well, give her this message, then. Tell her that Galley says to take good care of the girl that he just sent around here and to keep her dark."

"Which one?" demanded the woman.

"The one as was doped, that come in the hack."

"All right."

"That's all," said Talman, and walked off.

The self-constituted detective pondered as he passed down through the dark street. How should he use his information? Hate, gratitude, and the need for money all contended in his breast. He had long harbored a feeling of revenge against McSheen and Raffity and his understrapper, Gallagin. They had deserted him in his hour of need and he had come near being hanged for doing their work. Only his fear of McSheen's

power had kept him quiet. The desire for revenge and the feeling of gratitude worked together. But how should he use his knowledge? It behooved him to be prudent. Coll McSheen and Mick Raffity and Mel Gallagin were powerful forces in the world in which he moved. They could land him behind the bars in an hour if they worked together. At last he solved it!

He would go to a man who had always been kind to him and his. Thus it was, that just before light that morning John Marvel was awakened by a knock on his door. A man was below who said a sick person needed his services. When he came down into the street in the dim light of the dawning day, there was a man waiting in the shadow. He did not recognize him at first, but he recalled him as the man told the object of his visit at such an hour, and John was soon wide-awake. Still he could scarcely believe the story he was told.

"Why, she can't be there," he protested. "A friend of mine was there to look for her day before yesterday with the police, and she was not there."

"She is there now, and if you pull the place you'll get her all right," asserted the other.

"I'll go there myself."

"No use goin' by yourself."

"I'll get the police——"

"The police!" The other laughed derisively. "They don't go after the Big Chief's friends—not when he stands by 'em."

"The 'Big Chief'?"

"Coll McSheen."

"Mr. McSheen!"

"He's *it!*"

"It? What? I don't understand."

"Well, don't bring me into this."

"I will not."

"He's at the bottom of the whole business. He's the lawyer 't gives the dope and takes care of 'em. He owns the place—'t least, Mick Raffity and Gallagin and Smooth Ally own the places; and he owns them. He knows all about it and they don't turn a hand without him. Oh! I know him—I know 'em all!"

"You think this is the girl the lady was looking for?"

"I don't know. I only know she went there, and Gallagin showed his teeth, and then I called him down and got the gal out. I skeered him."

"Well, we'll see."

"Well, I must be goin'. I've told you. Swear you won't bring me into it. Good-night."

"I will not."

The man gazed down the street one way, then turned and went off in the other direction. John was puzzled, but a gleam of light came to him. Wolffert! Wolffert was the man to consult. What this man said was just what Wolffert had always insisted on: that "the White Slave traffic" was not only the most hideous crime now existing on earth, but that it was protected and promoted by men in power in the city, that it was, indeed, international in its range. He remembered to have heard him say that a law had been passed to deal with

it; but that such law needed the force of an awakened public conscience to become effective.

Thus it was, that that morning Wolffert was aroused by John Marvel coming into his room. In an instant he was wide-awake, for he, too, knew of the disappearance of Elsa, and of our fruitless hunt for her.

"But you are sure that this woman is Elsa?" he asked as he hurriedly dressed.

"No—only that it is some one."

"So much the better—maybe."

An hour later Wolffert and John Marvel were in a lawyer's office in one of the great new buildings of the city, talking to a young lawyer who had recently become a public prosecutor, not as a representative of the city, but of a larger power, that of the nation. He and Wolffert were already friends, and Wolffert had a little while before interested him in the cause to which he had for some time been devoting his powers. It promised to prove a good case, and the young attorney was keenly interested. The bigger the game, the better he loved the pursuit.

"Who's your mysterious informant, Mr. Marvel?" he asked.

"That I cannot tell you. He is not a man of good character, but I am sure he is telling me the truth."

"We must make no mistakes—we don't want these people to escape, and the net will catch bigger fish, I hope, than you suspect. Why not tell?"

"I cannot."

"Well, then I shall have to get the proof in some

other way. I will act at once and let you hear from me soon. In fact, I have a man on the case now. I learned of it yesterday from my cousin, you know. She is deeply interested in trying to break up this vile business, and a part of what you say I already knew. But the clews lead to bigger doors than you dream of."

John and Wolffert came away together and decided on a plan of their own. Wolffert was to come to see me and get Langton interested in the case, and John was to go to see Langton to send him to me. He caught Langton just as he was leaving his house to come to my office and walked a part of the way back with him, giving him the facts he had learned. He did not know that Langton was already on the case, and the close-mouthed detective never told anything.

When they parted, Langton came to my office, and together we went to the district attorney's, who, after a brief talk, decided to act at once, and accordingly had warrants issued and placed in the hands of his marshal.

"I have been trying for some time to get at these people," he said, "and I have the very man for the work—an officer whom Coll McSheen turned out for making trouble for the woman who keeps that house."

Aroused by my interest in the Loewens and by what Langton had told me of Miss Leigh's daring the night before, I secured the marshal's consent to go along with them, the district attorney having, indeed, appointed me a deputy marshal for the occasion.

The marshal's face had puzzled me at first, but I soon recognized him as the officer I had met once while I watched a little child's funeral. "They were too many for me," he said in brief explanation. "Mrs. Collis had me turned out. She had a pull with the Big Chief. And when I went for his friend, Smooth Ally, he bounced me. But I'm all right now, Mr. Semmes knows me, and Coll McSheen may look out. I know him."

I do not know what might have happened had we been a little later in appearing on the scene. As, after having sent a couple of men around to the back of the block, we turned into the street we saw three or four men enter the house as though in a hurry. We quickened our steps, but found the door locked, and the voices within told that something unusual was going on. The high pitched voice of a woman in a tirade and the low growls of men came to us through the door, followed by the noise of a scuffle and the smashing of furniture; a thunderous knock on the door, however, brought a sudden silence.

As there was no response either to the knock or ring, another summons even more imperative was made, and this time a window was opened above, a woman thrust her head out and in a rather frightened voice asked what was wanted. The reply given was a command to open the door instantly, and as the delay in obeying appeared somewhat unreasonable, a different method was adopted. The door was forced with an ease which gave me a high idea of the officer's skill. Within

everything appeared quiet, and the only circumstance to distinguish the house from a rather tawdry small hotel of a flashy kind was a man and that man, John Marvel, with a somewhat pale face, his collar and vest torn and a reddish lump on his forehead, standing quietly in the doorway of what appeared to be a sitting-room where the furniture had been upset, and the woman whom I had formerly seen when I visited the place with a police officer, standing at the far end of the hall in a condition of fright bordering on hysterics. I think I never saw men so surprised as those in our party were to find a preacher there. It was only a moment, however, before the explanation came.

"She's here, I believe," said John, quietly, "unless they have gotten her away just now."

His speech appeared to have unchained the fury of the woman, for she swept forward suddenly like a tornado, and such a blast of rage and abuse and hate I never heard pour from a woman's lips. Amid tears and sobs and savage cries of rage, she accused John Marvel of every crime that a man could conceive of, asserting all the while that she herself was an innocent and good woman and her house an absolutely proper and respectable home. She imprecated upon him every curse and revenge which she could think of. I confess that, outraged as I was by the virago's attack, I was equally surprised by John Marvel's placidness and the officer's quiet contempt. The only thing that John Marvel said was:

"There were some men here just now."

"Liar! Liar! Liar!" screamed the woman. "You know you lie. There is not a man in this house except that man, and he came here to insult me—he who comes here all the time—you know you do, —— —— ——!"

"Where are the men?" demanded the marshal quietly, but he got no answer except her scream of denial.

"They were after me," said John, "but when you knocked on the door they ran off."

Another outpour of denial and abuse.

"Come on, men," said the marshal.

John Marvel had been troubled by no such scruples as had appeared to me. He was not afraid for his reputation as I had been for mine. And on his way home he had had what he felt to be, and what, far be from me to say was not, a divine guidance. A sudden impulse or "call" as he termed it, had come to him to go straight to this house, and, having been admitted, he demanded the lost girl. The woman in charge denied vehemently that such a girl had ever been there or that she knew anything of her, playing her part of outraged modesty with a great show of sincerity. But when Marvel persisted and showed some knowledge of the facts, she took another tack and began to threaten him. He was a preacher, she said, and she would ruin him. She would call in the police, and she would like to see how it would look when an account came out in the newspapers next morning of his having visited what he thought a house of ill repute. She had friends among the police, and bigger friends even than the police, and they would see her through.

John quietly seated himself. A serene and dauntless resolution shone from his eyes. "Well, you had better be very quick about it," he said, "for I have already summoned officers and they will be here directly."

Then the woman weakened and began to cringe. She told him the same story that she had told me and the policeman when we had called before. A young woman had come there with a gentleman whom she called her husband, but she would not let her stay because she suspected her, etc., etc.

"Why did you suspect her?"

"Because, and because, and because," she explained. "For other reasons, because the man was a foreigner."

John Marvel, for all his apparent heaviness, was clear-headed and reasonable. He was not to be deceived, so he quietly sat and waited. Then the woman had gone, as she said, to call the police, but, as was shown later, she had called not the police, but Gallagin and Mick Raffity and the man who stood behind and protected both of these creatures and herself, and the men who had come in response had been not officers of the police, but three scoundrels who, under a pretence of respectability, were among the most dangerous instruments used by Coll McSheen and his heelers. Fortunately for John Marvel we had arrived in the nick of time. All this appeared later.

Unheeding her continued asseverations and vituperation, the marshal proceeded to examine the house. The entire lower floor was searched without finding the woman. In the kitchen below, which was some-

what elaborate in its appointments, a number of suspiciously attired and more than suspicious looking young women were engaged, apparently, in preparing to cook, for as yet the fire was hardly made, and in scrubbing industriously. Up-stairs a number more were found. For the moment nothing was said to them, but the search proceeded. They were all manifestly in a state of subdued excitement which was painful to see, as with disheveled hair, painted faces and heaving bosoms, they pretended to be engaged in tasks which manifestly they had rarely ever attempted before. Still there was no sign of Elsa, and as the proprietor declared that we had seen every room except that in which her sick daughter was asleep, it looked as though Elsa might not have been there after all.

"Let us see your daughter," said the officer.

This was impossible. The doctor had declared that she must be kept absolutely quiet, and in fact the woman made such a show of sincerity and motherly anxiety, that I think I should have been satisfied. The marshal, however, knew his business better—he insisted on opening the door indicated, and inside, stretched on a dirty pallet, was a poor creature, evidently ill enough, if not actually at the point of death. It was not, however, the woman's daughter; but to my unspeakable horror, I recognized instantly the poor girl I had once rescued from a less cruel death and had turned over to the Salvation Army. There was no mistaking her. Her scarred face was stamped indelibly on my memory. She presently recognized me too; but all

she said was, "They got me back. I knew they would." We turned her over to John Marvel, while awaiting the ambulance, and continued our search which threatened to prove fruitless so far as Elsa Loewen was concerned. But at this moment a curious thing occurred. Dixey, who had been following me all the morning and had, without my taking notice of him, come not only to the house with us, but had come in as well, began to nose around and presently stopped at a door, where he proceeded to whimper as he was accustomed to do when he wished to be let in at a closed door. I called him off, but though he came, he went back again and again, until he attracted the officer's attention. The door was a low one, and appeared to be the entrance only to a cupboard.

"Have we been in that room?"

The woman declared that we had, but as we all knew it had not been entered, she changed and said it was not the door of a room at all, but of a closet.

"Open it!" said the officer.

"The key is lost," said the woman. "We do not use it!"

"Then I will open it," said the marshal, and the next moment the door was forced open. The woman gave a scream and made a dash at the nearest man, beside herself with rage, fighting and tearing like a wild animal. And well she might, for inside, crumpled up on the floor, under a pile of clothing, lay the girl we were searching for, in a comatose state. She was lifted carefully and brought out into the light, and

I scarcely knew her, so battered and bruised and dead-alive the poor thing appeared. Dixey, however, knew, and he testified his affection and gratitude by stealing in between us as we stood around her and licking the poor thing's hand. It was a terrible story that was revealed when the facts came out, and its details were too horrifying and revolting to be put in print, but that night Madam Snow's hotel was closed. The lights which had lured so many a frail bark to shipwreck were extinguished, and Madam Snow and her wretched retinue of slaves, who had been bound to a servitude more awful than anything which history could tell or romance could portray, were held in the custody of the marshal of the United States.

The newspapers next day, with one exception, contained an account of the "pulling" of Smooth Ally's place. That exception was *The Trumpet.* But a day or two later John Marvel received a cheque for $200 from Coll McSheen "for his poor." I had never seen Wolffert show more feeling than when John, in the innocency of his heart, told him of the gift. "It is the wedge of Achan!" he exclaimed. "It is hush money. It is blood money. It is the thirty pieces of silver given for blood. Even Judas returned it." He made his proof clear, and the money was returned.

XXXII

"DOCTOR CAIAPHAS"

It was the duty of the street-car company under their charter to run through cars every day or forfeit their charter—a wise provision, doubtless; but one which did not contemplate that Coll McSheen who was trying to destroy the company should have control of the police on whose protection the ability to carry out the charter depended.

Under the compulsion of this requirement to run through cars, the management of the street-car line, after much trouble, secured a few men who, for a large price, agreed to operate the cars. But it was several hours after the regular time before the first car ran out of the shed. It made its way for some distance without encountering any difficulty or even attracting any attention beyond a few comments by men and women walking along the streets or standing in their doors. A little further along there were a few jeers, but presently it turned a corner and reached a point in a street where a number of boys were playing, as usual, and a number of men out of work were standing about smoking their pipes and discussing with some acrimony the action of the meeting which had called the strike, and with some foreboding the future. As the car stopped for a moment to take on a woman who had been waiting, a

number of the boys playing in the street began to jeer and hoot the motorman, who was evidently somewhat unaccustomed to handling his car, and when he attempted to loosen his brake, and showed therein his unskilfulness, jeers turned into taunts, and the next moment a few handfuls of rubbish picked up in a gutter were flung at him. In a twinkling, as if by magic the street filled, and vegetables taken from in front of a neighboring shop, mingled with a few stones, began to rattle against the car, smashing the windows with much noise. The rattling glass quickly attracted attention. It was like a bugle call, and in a minute more the road was blocked and a dozen youths sprang upon the car and a fierce fight ensued between them and the motorman and conductor, both of whom were soundly beaten and might have been killed but for their promise to give up their job and the somewhat tardy arrival of the police who had been promised, but had appeared on the scene only after the riot had taken place. This collision, which was begun by a lot of irresponsible boys, was described under glaring headlines in all of the afternoon papers as a riot of vast dimension. The effect of the riot, great or small, was instantaneous and far-reaching throughout the entire section. That evening the entire population of that section had changed from an attitude of reasonable neutrality to one of unequivocal hostility. It was a psychological moment. The spark had been dropped in the powder. Next day it was as if war had been declared. There were no neutrals. All had taken sides.

Before many days were out the strike had progressed so far that, instead of its being a small body of men engaged in cessation of work, with pacific methods of attempting to dissuade others who wished to continue their work from doing so, or, by some more positive form of argument known as picketing, of preventing new-comers from taking the places of those who had struck, it had developed into an active force whose frank object was to render it impossible for any man to take or hold a position as an employee of the railway company. It was not so much that meetings were frequently held and the measures advocated constantly grew more and more violent, nor that occasional outbreaks occurred, as that the whole temper of the people was becoming inflamed, and the conditions of life affected thereby were becoming almost intolerable. The call of the company on the mayor, as the representative of the public, to grant them protection, was promptly, if somewhat evasively, replied to. No man knew better than Coll McSheen how to express himself so that he might be understood differently by different men. It had been one of his strong cards in climbing to the altitude which he had reached. But the idea that the police would render efficient aid to the company was openly and generally scoffed at in the quarters where the strike prevailed. It was boldly declared that the police were in sympathy with the strikers. This report appeared to have some foundation, when one cold night, with the thermometer at zero, a fire broke out in the mills owned by Mr. Leigh's company,

and they were gutted from foundation to roof. It was charged on the strikers; but an investigation showed that this charge, like many others, was unfounded; at least, as it alleged a direct and intentional act. The evidence proved conclusively to my mind that the fire, while of incendiary origin, was started by a gang of reckless and dissolute youths who had no relation whatever to the strikers, but whose purpose was to exhibit their enmity against a company which was held in such disfavor generally. This was the contention of Wolffert in his papers on the incident, and the view which Mr. Leigh afterward adopted.

It was only an expression of the general feeling that had grown up in the city under the influence of the strike —one of the baleful offspring of the condition which McSheen and Wringman and their like had been able to produce from the conflict which they had projected and fostered. The wretched youths who were arrested, told under the sweating process a series of wholly conflicting and incredible lies, and in time two of them were convicted on their own confessions and sent to the State prison, and the strikers who had not yet resorted to extreme measures of violence got the credit of the crime.

The continued spread of the strike and of sympathy with it had already reached large proportions. The losses to business and to business men and the inconvenience to even the well-to-do classes were immense and when calculated in figures were quite staggering. The winter had set in with sudden severity. The

suffering among the poor was incalculable. There was not a house or shop in the poorer districts where the pinch of poverty was not beginning to be felt. The wolf, which ever stands beside the door of the poor, had long since entered and cleaned out many of the small dwellings which the summer before had been the abode of hope and of reasonable content. Only the human wolves who prey on misfortune battened and fattened; the stock-brokers who organized raids on "the market," the usurers who robbed the poor more directly, but not more effectively, the thieves of one kind or another alone prospered. The cry of hunger increased while bitterness without and within had long since begun to be universal, so long as to be scarcely heeded throughout the poor quarters. The efforts of philanthropy, individual and organized, were exercised to the utmost, but the trouble was too vast to be more than touched on the outer fringe. The evil which Mr. Leigh had predicted had come to pass and his prophecy had been far more than verified. Many of the young women, turned from their factories, had disappeared from the places which knew them before and found their way to haunts like Mel Gallagin's "Gallery" and others less splendid, but not more wicked. Only in the sphere in which persons of extraordinary accumulation moved, like the Canters and the Argands, was there apparently no diminution in their expenditure and display. Young Canter and his comrades still flaunted their vast wealth in undisguised and irresponsible display—still gambled on the stock boards in commodities

that touched the lives of pining thousands—still multiplied their horses and automobiles, and drove them recklessly through crowded streets, heedless of the pinched and scowling faces of unemployed multitudes. But older and saner heads were beginning to shake when the future was mentioned. The reefing of sails for a storm whose forerunners were on the horizon was already taking place, and every reef meant that some part of the crew which had sailed the ship so far was dropped overboard.

The devil is credited with the power to raise a tempest. Certainly tempests are raised, but sometimes even the devil cannot quiet them. Such was the case with the strike. McSheen, Wringman and Co. had been completely successful in getting the strike of the Leigh employees under way: when it started, they privately took much pride in their work. Wringman received his wage and gratified his feeling of revenge for Mr. Leigh's cool contempt of him on the occasion when he called to demand terms of him. McSheen had a score of longer standing to settle. It dated back to the time when Mr. Leigh, looking with clear and scornful eyes at his work, gave him to feel that at least one man knew him to the bottom of his scoundrelly soul. For a while it appeared as though Mr. Leigh would be irretrievably ruined and McSheen and his friends and secret backers like Canter would secure easy possession of the properties his power of organization had built up; but suddenly an unlooked-for ally with abundant resources had come to Mr. Leigh's assistance in the person of an old

friend, and the ripened fruit of their labors had been plucked from their hands outstretched to grasp it. And now having raised the tempest, these gamblers could not calm it. In other words, having started a strike among Mr. Leigh's operatives for a specific purpose, it had spread like a conflagration and now threatened to destroy everything. The whole laboring population were getting into a state of ferment. Demands were made by their leaders such as had never been dreamed of before. The leaders were working them for their own purposes, and were after a temporary raise of wages. But there was a graver danger. The people were becoming trained. A new leader was coming forward, and his writings were having a profound influence. He could not be bullied, and he could not be bought, this Jew, Wolffert. He was opening the eyes of the People. Unless the thing were stopped, there would be a catastrophe which would ruin them all. This was the judgment that McSheen and Canter and Co. arrived at. And this was the conclusion that Mr. Canter, Sr., announced to his son and heir, Mr. Canter, Jr., at the close of an interview in which he had discussed his affairs with more openness than he usually employed with that audacious young operator. "The fact is," he said, "that we have failed in the object of our move. We have not got hold of Leigh's lines—and his men are returning to work while ours are just beginning to fight—and instead of getting his properties, we stand a blessed good show of losing our own. McSheen couldn't deliver the goods and there is the devil to pay.

Why don't you stop your —— nonsense and settle down and marry that girl? She's the prettiest girl in town and— Well, you might go a good deal further and fare worse. There is a good property there if we don't destroy it fighting for it. If you are ever going to do it, now is the time, and we are bound to have it, if possible, to save our own."

Mr. Canter, Jr., shrugged his shoulders. "How do you know she would have me?" he asked with a sort of grin which was not altogether mirthful. He did not feel it necessary to impart to his parent the fact that he was beginning to have strong doubts himself on the subject. But Canter, Jr., was no fool.

"Well, of course, she won't, if you go spreeing around with a lot of blanked hussies. No decent woman would. But why the deuce don't you drop that business? You are getting old enough now to know better. And you can't keep hitting it up as you have been doing. There's a new system coming in in this town, and you'll get in trouble if you don't look out. You came precious near it the other night. Those young men mean business. Get rid of that woman."

Young Canter for once came near disclosing to his father the whole situation and telling him the truth. He however contented himself with his usual half-light assurance that he was all right—and that he was going to settle down. He could not bring himself to tell him that he found himself bound with a chain which he could not break, and that "that woman" would not be

gotten rid of. She, in fact, threatened not only to make a terrible scandal if he attempted to leave her, but actually menaced his life.

However, he determined to act on his father's advice. He would break off from her and if he could carry through his plans he would marry and go abroad and remain until the storm had blown over and "that woman" had consoled herself with some other soft young millionaire.

Among all the people affected by the strike none suffered more, I believe, than John Marvel and Wolffert. I never saw any one more distressed by the suffering about them than these two men. Others suffered physically, they mentally, and in the reflexive way which comes from overwrought sympathies. Where gloom and dull hate scowled from the brows of the working class, sadness and sorrow shadowed John's brow, though at need he always had a smile and a cheery word for every one. He was soon reduced to his last suit of clothes, and as the cold increased, he went about overcoatless and gloveless, walking like fury and beating his arms to keep himself from freezing, his worn overcoat and gloves having long since gone with everything else he had to help some one needier than himself. "Take a long, deep breath," he used to say, "and it will warm you up like a fire. What does a young man need with an overcoat?" What, indeed, with the thermometer at zero, and rapidly slipping still lower! "Those I grieve for are the old and the sick and the young children."

However this was, he was busier than ever—going in and out among his poor; writing letters, making calls, appealing to those able to give, and distributing what he could collect, which, indeed, was no little, for the people at large were sympathetic with suffering and generous to poverty. And his ablest assistant in the work was Wolffert, if, indeed, he was not the leader. I never knew before what one man's intellect and zeal consecrated to a work could accomplish. The great morass of poverty, wide and profound at all times, extending through the city, sapping the foundations and emitting its exhalations, became now bottomless and boundless. Into this morass Wolffert flung himself with the earnestness of a zealot. He worked day and night, organizing relief associations; looking after individual cases; writing letters to the press and picturing conditions with a vividness which began to make an impression on all sides. He counselled patience and moderation on the part of the poor, but made no secret of his sympathy with them, and where he dealt with the injustice shown them it was with a pen of flame. The conservative papers charged that his letters added fuel to the flames already blazing. It was possibly true. Certainly, the flames were spreading.

As the strike proceeded and violence increased, those evidences of sympathy which came in the form of contributions grew less, and at last they began to fail perceptibly. In the commotion the foulest dregs of the seething community were thrown up, the vilest scum rose to the top. As in the case of Mr. Leigh's fire, what-

ever outrages were committed were charged to the strikers. The press, which had begun with expressions of sympathy with the strikers, had, under the impending shadow, changed its tone and was now calling on the authorities to put down lawlessness with a strong hand; demanding that the police should be ordered to protect the property and lives of citizens, and calling on the mayor to bestir himself and call on the governor for aid.

In this state of the case John Marvel, wishing to see what could be done to ameliorate the conditions about him, called a meeting of his congregation at his church one evening just before Christmas, and when the time came the little chapel was crowded to suffocation. It was a sombre and depressing-looking crowd that thronged the aisles of the little building. Poverty and want were in every face. A hopeless, sullen misery sat on every brow. The people thought that somehow some good would come of it, and many who had never been inside the walls before were on hand. I went in consequence of a talk I had with Marvel, who had casually mentioned Miss Eleanor Leigh's name in connection with the first suggestion of the call. And I was rewarded, for seated back in the crowd, with her face a little more pallid than usual and her eyes filled with the light of expectancy and kindness, sat Eleanor Leigh. She was dressed with great simplicity; but her appearance was not the less attractive, at least to me. She smiled from time to time to some acquaintance in the sad-looking throng, but I had a pang of jealousy to see

how her gaze followed John Marvel, and one other member of the assembly, whose presence rather surprised me, Wolffert.

After a brief service John Marvel, in a few touching and singularly apt words, explained the reason for having called them together, irrespective of their church relation, and urged that, as the blessed season which was accepted by Christendom as the time of peace on earth and good-will to all men was drawing near, they should all try to lay aside personal feeling and hates and grievances, and try what effect kindness and good-will would accomplish. He asked that all would try to help each other as formerly, and trust to the Divine and Merciful Master to right their wrongs and inspire compassion for their sufferings. He referred to the terrible development that had just been made among them—the discovery of Elsa and the other poor girl who had been found at the Snow house—to the sudden arousing of the law after years of praying and working, and with a word of compassion for the poor creatures who had been misled and enslaved, he urged patience and prayer as the means to secure God's all-powerful help in their distress. His words and manner were simple and touching, and I do not attempt to give any idea of them or of their effect. But I somehow felt as though I were hearing the very teaching of Christ. He would call on one who was their friend as they knew, the friend of all who needed a friend, to say a few words to them. He turned to Wolffert. Wolffert walked forward a few steps and turned, made a brief but power-

ful statement of the situation, and counselled patience and forbearance. He knew their sufferings, he said —he knew their fortitude. He knew their wrongs, but patience and fortitude would in time bring a realization of it all in the minds of the public. What was needed was to make known to the world the truth, not as changed and distorted by ignorance or evil design, but as it existed in fact. They had a more powerful weapon than bullets or bayonets, the power of truth and justice. His own people had been preserved by Jehovah through the ages by the patience and fortitude He had given them, and God's arm was not shortened that He could not save nor His ear dulled that He could not hear. He used the same illustration that John Marvel had used: the unexpected arousing of the law to defend and save poor ignorant girls, who were being dragged down to the bottomless pit by organized infamy under the protection of men who had made themselves more powerful than the law. For these he had a few scathing words. He told of John Marvel's going to find Elsa, and referred to the aid he had received from others, those connected with the railway line on which the strike existed; and he counselled them to protect themselves, obey the law, keep the peace, and await with patience the justice of God. Efforts were being made to furnish them with fuel.

It may have been Wolffert's deep, flashing eyes, his earnest manner and vibrant voice, which affected them, for, though he held himself under strong restraint, he was deeply affected himself; but when John Marvel,

after a brief prayer, dismissed them with the benediction, the people, men and women, passed out in almost silence and dispersed to their homes, and their murmured talk was all in a new key of resignation and even of distant hope. I felt as though I had shaken off the trammels of selfishness that had hitherto bound me, and was getting a glimpse of what the world might become in the future. This simple follower of Christ among his poor, threadbare like them, like them fireless and hungry and poor, illustrated his master's teaching in a way which I had never seen before, and it gave me a new insight into his power. I should have liked to go up to Eleanor Leigh and make peace with her; but while I deliberated Wolffert joined her and I walked home alone and thoughtful.

The press next morning had a fairly full notice of the meeting—the first that had ever been given to the work done through the chapel and its minister. The chief notices in it were the connection of the minister with the case of Elsa Loewen and the attack on the system made by a Jew. One paper had the heading:

"JEW AND CHRISTIAN."

Another's headline ran:

"PREACHER MARVEL VISITS A BAGNIO."

And it was only below that it was made plain that John Marvel had gone thither to rescue a lost girl. This, Kalender once informed me, was the true art of making

headlines. "Half the world don't read anything but the headlines," he asserted, "and the other half don't remember anything else." The story made a sensation which Kalender himself might have coveted.

That day about noon Mrs. Argand received a call from her counsel, the Hon. Collis McSheen, who unfolded to her such a diabolical scheme to injure her property interests in common with those of every other important property holder in the city, by a wicked Jewish wretch and his fellow in mischief, who professed to be a preacher of the Gospel in a chapel which she had largely helped to build for the poor, that between fright and rage the good lady was scarcely able to wait long enough to summon the Rev. Dr. Capon to her house. The Hon. Collis did not mention the fact that one of his own houses was at that moment closed through the act of this scheming parson, nor that he was beginning to shake over the idea that the investigation beginning to be set on foot in consequence of the meddlesomeness of this same person might reach uncomfortably near his own door, and that he was sensible that a force was being aroused which he could not control.

Most women trust implicitly in their lawyers, and, curiously enough, many trust them in their affairs even when they know they are dishonest. Coll McSheen knew perfectly how to deal with Mrs. Argand. He descanted eloquently on his duty to the great estate she represented and his pride in her admirable management of it. One of the great fountains of charity was in danger.

The Reverend Doctor Bartholomew Capon visited his parishioner and was quite as much upset as she herself was over the information received from Mr. McSheen. Dr. Capon had but an indifferent opinion of Mr. McSheen. He knew him to be by repute a protector of evildoers, a man of loose morals and low instincts, but he was a man of power of the brute kind and of keen insight into the grosser conditions. And his views as to the effect on property of any movement in the city were entitled to great respect, and property, to the doctor's mind, was undoubtedly a divine institution. Moreover, a Jew who assailed it must have some ulterior design. And to think of his having been permitted to speak in his chapel! So Dr. Capon returned to his home much displeased with his assistant and, sitting down, wrote him a note immediately.

This note John Marvel received next morning in his mail. It ran as follows:

"Mr. Marvel will call at the rector's office to-morrow, Tuesday, at 11.30 promptly.

"(Signed) BARTHOLOMEW CAPON, D.D.,
"*Rector*, etc., etc."

The tone of the note struck even John Marvel and he immediately brought it over to me. We both agreed that the doctor must have read the account of the raid on Madam Snow's and of his presence there when the officers arrived, and we decided that, notwithstanding the curtness of the summons, it was due to John himself to go and make a simple statement of the matter.

We felt indeed that the interview might result in awakening the living interest of Dr. Capon in the work on which we had embarked and securing the co-operation not only of himself but of the powerful organization which he represented as rector of a large church. Dr. Capon was not a difficult man; in his own way, which was the way of many others, he tried to do good. He was only a worldly man and a narrow man. He felt that his mission was to the rich. He knew them better than the poor and liked them better. The poor had so much done for them, why should not he look after the rich? Like Simon, he believed that there was a power in money which was unlimited.

At 11.30 promptly John Marvel presented himself in the front room of the building attached to the church, in one corner of which was the rector's roomy office. A solemn servant was in waiting who took in his name, closing the door silently behind him, and after a minute returned and silently motioned John Marvel to enter. Dr. Capon was seated at his desk with a number of newspapers before him, and in response to John's "Good morning," he simply said, "Be seated," with a jerk of his head toward a chair which was placed at a little distance from him, and John took the seat, feeling, as he afterward told me, much as he used to feel when a small boy, when he was called up by a teacher and set down in a chair for a lecture. The rector shuffled his newspapers in a sudden little accession of excitement, taking off his gold-rimmed glasses and putting them on again, and then taking up one, he turned to John.

"Mr. Marvel, I am astonished at you—I am simply astounded that you should have so far forgotten yourself and what was due to your orders as to have done what I read in this sheet and what the whole press is ringing with."

"Well, sir," said John, who had by this time gotten entire control of himself, and felt completely at ease in the consciousness of his innocence and of his ability to prove it. "I am not surprised that you should be astounded unless you knew the facts of the case."

"What facts, sir?" demanded Dr. Capon sternly. "Facts! There is but one fact to be considered—that you have violated a fundamental canon."

"Yes, I knew it would look so, and I had intended to come yesterday to consult you as to the best method——"

"It is a pity you had not done so—that you allowed your sense of duty to be so obscured as to forget what was due alike to me and to your sacred vows."

"But I was very much engaged," pursued John, "with matters that appeared to me of much greater importance than anything relating to my poor self."

"Oh!" exclaimed the rector. "Cease! Cease your pretences! Mr. Marvel, your usefulness is ended. Sign that paper!"

He picked up and held out to him with a tragic air a paper which he had already prepared before John Marvel's arrival. John's mind had for the moment become a blank to some extent under the unexpected attack, and it was a mechanical act by which his eye took in the fact that the paper thrust into his hand was

a resignation declaring that it was made on the demand of the rector for reasons stated which rendered it imperative that he sever his connection with that parish.

"I will not sign that paper," said John quietly.

"You will not what?" The rector almost sprang out of his chair.

"I will not sign that paper."

"And pray, why not?"

"Because it places me in the position of acknowledging a charge which, even if true, has not been specifically stated, and which is not true whatever the appearances may be, as I can readily prove."

"Not true?" the rector exclaimed. "Is it not true that you allowed a Jew to speak in your church, in my chapel?"

"That I did what?" asked John, amazed at the unexpected discovery of the rector's reason.

"That you invited and permitted a man named Wolffert, a socialistic Jew, to address a congregation in my chapel?"

"It is true," said John Marvel, "that I invited Mr. Wolffert to speak to an assemblage in the chapel under my charge, and that he did so speak there."

"Uttering the most dangerous and inflammatory doctrines—doctrines alike opposed to the teaching of the church and to the command of the law?"

"That is not true," said John. "You have been misinformed."

"I do not wish or propose to discuss either this or any other matter with you, Mr. Marvel. You have

allowed a Jew to speak in the house of God. Your usefulness is ended. You will be good enough to sign this paper, for you may rest assured that I know my rights and shall maintain them."

"No, I will not sign this paper," said John Marvel, "but I will resign. Give me a sheet of paper."

The rector handed him a sheet, and John drew up a chair to the desk and wrote his resignation in a half-dozen words and handed it to the rector.

"Is that accepted?" he asked quietly.

"It is." The rector laid the sheet on his desk and then turned back to John Marvel. "And now, Mr. Marvel, allow me to say that you grossly, I may say flagitiously, violated the trust I reposed in you when——"

John Marvel held up his hand. "Stop! Not one word more from you. I am no longer your assistant. I have stood many things from you because I believed it was my duty to stand them, so long as I was in a position where I could be of service, and because I felt it my duty to obey you as my superior officer, but now that this connection is severed, I wish to say that I will not tolerate one more word or act of insolence from you."

"Insolence?" cried the rector. "Insolence? You are insolent yourself, sir. You do not know the meaning of the term."

"Oh! Yes, I know it," said John, who had cooled down after his sudden outbreak. "I have had cause to know it. I have been your assistant for two years. I bid you good morning, Dr. Capon." He turned and walked out, leaving the rector speechless with rage.

I do not mean in relating Dr. Capon's position in this interview to make any charge against others who might honestly hold the same view which he held as to the propriety of John Marvel's having requested Leo Wolffert to speak in his church, however much I myself might differ from that view, and however I might think in holding it they are tithing the mint, anise, and cumin, and overlooking the weightier matters of the law. My outbreak of wrath, when John Marvel told me of his interview with the rector, was due, not to the smallness of the rector's mind, but to the simple fact that he selected this as the basis of his charge, when in truth it was overshadowed in his mind by the fact that Leo Wolffert's address had aroused the ire of one of his leading parishioners, and that the doctor was thus guilty of a sham in bringing his charge, not because of the address, but because of the anger of his wealthy parishioner. Wolffert was savage in his wrath when he learned how John had been treated. "Your church is the church of the rich," he said to me; for he would not say it to John. And when I defended it and pointed to its work done among the poor, to its long line of faithful devoted workers, to its apostles and martyrs, to John Marvel himself, he said: "Don't you see that Dr. Caiaphas is one of its high-priests and is turning out its prophets? I tell you it will never prosper till he is turned out and the people brought in! Your Church is the most inconsistent in the world, and I wonder they do not see it. Its Head, whom it considers divine and worships as God, lived and died in a continual war

against formalism and sacerdotalism, it was the foundation of all his teaching for which he finally suffered death at the hands of the priests. The imperishable truth in that teaching is that God is within you, and to be worshipped 'in spirit' and in truth; that not the temple made with hands, but the temple of the body is the one temple, and that the poor are his chosen people—the poor in heart are his loved disciples; yet your priests arrogate to themselves all that he suffered to overthrow. Your Dr. Capon is only Dr. Caiaphas, with a few slight changes, and presumes to persecute the true disciples precisely as his predecessors persecuted their master."

"He is not my Dr. Capon," I protested.

"Oh! well, he is the representative of the ecclesiasticism that crucifies spiritual freedom and substitutes form for substance. He 'makes broad his phylacteries and for a pretence makes long prayers.'"

"It appears to me that you are very fond of quoting the Bible, for an unbeliever," I said.

"I, an unbeliever! I, a Jew!" exclaimed Wolffert, whose eyes were sparkling. "My dear sir, I am the believer of the ages—I only do not believe that any forms established by men are necessary to bring men into communion with God—I refuse to believe selfishness, and arrogance, and blindness, when they step forth with bell, book, and candle, and say, obey us, or be damned. I refuse to worship a ritual, or a church. I will worship only God." He turned away with that detached air which has always struck me as something oriental.

As soon as it became known in his old parish that John had resigned he was called back there; but the solicitations of his poor parishioners that he should not abandon them in their troubles prevailed, and Wolffert and I united in trying to show him that his influence now was of great importance. Indeed, the workers among the poor of every church came and besought him to remain. Little Father Tapp, patting him on the shoulder, said, "Come to us, John, the Holy Father will make you a bishop." So he remained with his people and soon was given another small chapel under a less fashionable and more spiritual rector. I think Eleanor Leigh had something to do with his decision. I know that she was so urgent for him to remain that both Dr. Capon and I were given food for serious thought.

XXXIII

THE PEACE-MAKER

It was in this condition of affairs that a short time after John Marvel had been dismissed from his cure by his incensed rector, a great dinner was given by Mrs. Argand which, because of the lavishness of the display and the number of notable persons in the city who were present, and also because of a decision that was reached by certain of the guests at the dinner and the consequences which it was hoped might ensue therefrom, was fully written up in the press. If Mrs. Argand knew one thing well, it was how to give an entertainment which should exceed in its magnificence the entertainment of any other person in the city. She was a woman of great wealth. She had had a large experience both at home and abroad in entertainments whose expenditure remained traditional for years. She had learned from her husband the value, as a merely commercial venture, of a fine dinner. She knew the traditional way to men's hearts, and she felt that something was due to her position, and at the same time she received great pleasure in being the centre and the dispenser of a hospitality which should be a wonder to all who knew her. Her house with its great rooms and galleries filled with expensive pictures lent itself well to entertainment. And Mrs. Argand, who knew something of history, fancied that

she had what quite approached a salon. To be sure, those who frequented it were more familiar with stock-exchanges and counting-houses than with art or literature. On this occasion she had assembled a number of the leading men of affairs in the city, with the purpose not so much of entertaining them, as of securing from them a co-operation, which, by making a show of some concession to the starving strikers and their friends, should avail to stop the steady loss in her rents and drain on even her great resources. She had already found herself compelled, by reason of the reduction in her income, which prevented her putting by as large a surplus as she had been accustomed to put by year by year, to cut off a number of her charities, and this she disliked to do, for she not only regretted having to cut down her outlay for the relief of suffering, but it was a blow to her pride to feel that others knew that her income was reduced.

The idea of the dinner had been suggested by no less a person than Dr. Capon himself, to whom the happy thought had occurred that possibly if a huge mass meeting composed of the strikers could be assembled in some great auditorium, and addressed by the leading men in the city, they might be convinced of the folly and error of their ways and induced to reject the false teaching of their designing leaders and return to work, by which he argued the great suffering would be immediately reduced, the loss alike to labor and to capital would be stopped, peace would be restored, and the general welfare be tremendously advanced. Moreover, he would

show that his removal of his assistant was not due to his indifference to the poor as Wolffert had charged in a biting paper on the episode, but to a higher motive. What John Marvel had tried on a small scale he would accomplish on a vast one. He would himself, he said, take pleasure in addressing such an audience, and he felt sure that they would listen to the friendly admonition of a minister of the Gospel, who could not but stand to them as the representative of charity and divine compassion.

I will not attempt to describe the richness of the floral decorations which made Mrs. Argand's great house a bower of roses and orchids for the occasion, nor the lavish display of plate, gilded and ungilded, which loaded the great table, all of which was set forth in the press the following day with a lavishness of description and a wealth of superlatives quite equal to the display at the dinner; nor need I take time to describe the guests who were assembled. Mr. Leigh, who was invited, was not present, but expressed himself as ready to meet his men half-way. Every viand not in season was in the ménu. It was universally agreed by the guests that no entertainment which was recalled had ever been half so rich in its decorations or so regal in its display or so sumptuous in its fare; that certainly the same number of millions had never been represented in any private house in this city, or possibly, in any city of the country. It remains only to be said that the plan proposed by the Rev. Dr. Capon met with the approval of a sufficient number to secure an attempt at its adop-

tion, though the large majority of the gentlemen present openly expressed their disbelief that any good whatever would come of such an attempt, and more than one frankly declared that the doctor was attempting to sprinkle rose-water when really what was actually needed were guns and bayonets. The doctor, however, was so urgent in the expression of his views, so certain that the people would be reasonable and could not fail to be impressed by a kindly expression of interest, and the sound advice of one whom they must recognize as their friend, that a half-derisive consent was given to a trial of his plan.

Among the notices of this dinner was one which termed it "Belshazzar's Feast," and as such it became known in the workingmen's quarter. Its scorching periods described the Babylonian splendor of the entertainment provided for the officials of millionairedom, and pictured with simple art the nakedness of a hovel not five blocks away, in which an old man and an old woman had been found that day frozen to death. I recognized in it the work of Wolffert's virile pen. John Marvel might forgive Dr. Capon, but not Wolffert Dr. Caiaphas. The proposed meeting, however, excited much interest in all circles of the city, especially in that underlying circle of the poor whose circumference circumscribed and enclosed all other circles whatsoever. What was, indeed, of mere interest to others was of vital necessity to them, that some arrangement should be arrived at by which work should once more be given to the ever-increasing body of the unemployed, whose

sombre presence darkened the brightest day and tinged with melancholy the fairest expectation. In furtherance of Dr. Capon's plan a large hall was secured, and a general invitation was issued to the public, especially to the workingmen of the section where the strike existed, to attend a meeting set for the earliest possible moment, an evening in the beginning of the next week. The meeting took place as advertised and the attendance exceeded all expectation. The heart of the poor beat with renewed hope, though, like their wealthy neighbors, many of them felt that the hope was a desperate one. Still they worked toward the single ray of light which penetrated into the gloom of their situation.

The seats were filled long before the hour set for the meeting and every available foot of standing room was occupied, the corridors of the building were filled, and the streets outside were thronged with groups discussing the possibility of some settlement in low and earnest tones, broken now and then by some strident note of contention or sullen growl of hate. Knowing the interest in the movement throughout the quarter where I lived, and having some curiosity besides to hear what Coll McSheen and the Rev. Dr. Capon had to say, I went early in company with Wolffert and John Marvel, the former of whom was absolutely sceptical, the latter entirely hopeful of permanent results. Wolffert's eyes glowed with a deep but lambent flame as he spoke of "Dr. Caiaphas." On arrival at the hall he left us and moved to the front rows. The crowd on the platform

represented the leaders in many departments of business in the city, among whom were a fair sprinkling of men noted for their particular interest in all public charities and good works, and in a little group to one side, a small body composed of the more conservative element among the leaders of the workingmen in the city. The whole affair had been well worked up and on the outside it gave a fair promise of success. A number of boxes were filled with ladies interested in the movement and I had not been in the hall five minutes before I discovered Eleanor Leigh in one of the boxes, her face grave, but her eyes full of eager expectation. It was with a sinking of the heart that I reflected on the breach between us, and I fear that I spent my time much more in considering how I should overcome it than in plans to relieve the distress of others.

The meeting opened with an invocation by the Rev. Dr. Capon, which appeared to strike some of the assemblage as somewhat too eloquent, rather too long, and tinged with an expression of compassion for the ignorance and facility for being misguided of the working class. When he began the assemblage was highly reverent, when he ended there were murmurs of criticism and discussion audible throughout the hall. The introductory statement of the reason for the call was made by the Hon. Collis McSheen, who, as mayor of the city, lent the dignity of his presence to the occasion. It was long, eloquent, and absolutely silent as to his views on any particular method of settlement of the question at issue, but it expressed his sympathy with all

classes in terms highly general and concluded with an impartial expression of advice that they should get together, provided all could get what they wanted, which appeared to him the easiest thing in the world to do. Following him, one of the magnates of the city, Mr. James Canter, Sr., delivered a brief business statement of the loss to the city and the community at large, growing out of the strike, expressed in figures which had been carefully collated, and closed with the emphatic declaration that the working people did not know what they wanted. One other thing he made plain, that in a strike the working people suffered most, which was a proposition that few persons in the hall were prepared to deny. Then came the Rev. Dr. Capon, who was manifestly the chief speaker for the occasion. His manner was graceful and self-assured, his voice sonorous and well modulated, and his tone was sympathetic, if somewhat too patronizing. His first sentences were listened to with attention. He expressed his deep sympathy somewhat as the mayor had done, but in better English and more modulated tones, with all classes, especially with the working people. A slight cough appeared to have attacked one portion of the audience, but it stopped immediately, and silence once more fell on the assemblage as he proceeded.

"And now," he said, as he advanced a step nearer to the edge of the platform, and, having delivered himself of his preliminary expressions of condolence, threw up his head and assumed his best pulpit manner, "under a full sense of my responsibility to my people and my

country I wish to counsel you as your friend, as the friend of the poor"—the slight cough I have mentioned became audible again—"as the friend of the working-man whose interests I have so deeply at heart."

At this moment a young man who had taken a seat well to the front on the main aisle, rose in his seat and politely asked if the doctor would allow him to ask him a question, the answer to which he believed would enable the audience to understand his position better. The pleasant tone of the young man led the doctor to give permission, and also the young man's appearance, for it was Wolffert.

"Certainly, my dear sir," he said.

Wolffert suddenly held up in his hand a newspaper.

"I wish," he said, "to ask you where you dined last Friday night; with whom?"

The question provoked a sudden outpour of shouts and cheers and cries of derision, and in a moment pandemonium had broken loose. The doctor attempted to speak again and again, but about all that could be heard was his vociferation that he was their friend. Wolffert, whose question had caused the commotion, was now mounted on a chair and waving his arms wildly about him, and presently, moved by curiosity, the tumult subsided and the audience sat with their faces turned toward the man on the chair. He turned, and with a sweep of his arm toward the stage, he cried:

"We don't want to hear you. What have you done that you should give us advice? What do you know of us? When have you ever hearkened to the cry of the

destitute? When have you ever visited the fatherless and the widows in affliction, unless they were rich? When have you ever done anything but fawn on Herod and flatter Pontius? Whom are you here to help and set free to-day? These people? No! High-priest of wealth and power and usurpation, we know you and your friends—the Jesus you ask to free is not the Nazarene, but Barabbas, the robber, promoter of vice and patron of sin!"

His long arm pointed at the platform where sat McSheen, his face black with impotent rage. "If we are to have a priest to address us, let us have one that we can trust. Give us a man like John Marvel. We know him and he knows us." He turned and pointed to Marvel.

The effect was electrical. Shouts of "Marvel! Mr. Marvel! Marvel! Marvel! John Marvel!" rang from their throats, and suddenly, as with one impulse, the men turned to our corner where John Marvel had sunk in his seat to escape observation, and in an instant he was seized, drawn forth and lifted bodily on the shoulders of men and borne to the platform as if on the crest of a tidal wave. Coll McSheen and Dr. Capon were both shouting to the audience, but they might as well have addressed a tropical hurricane. The cries of "Marvel, Marvel" drowned every other sound, and presently those on the stage gathered about both McSheen and the rector, and after a moment one of them stepped forward and asked John Marvel to speak.

John Marvel turned, stepped forward to the edge of the platform, and reached out one long arm over the audience with an awkward but telling gesture that I had often seen him use, keeping it extended until, after one great outburst of applause, the tumult had died down.

"My friends," he began. Another tumult.

"That is it. Yes, we are your friends."

Still the arm outstretched commanded silence.

He began to speak quietly and slowly and his voice suddenly struck me as singularly sympathetic and clear, as it must have struck the entire assembly, for suddenly the tumult ceased and the hall became perfectly quiet. He spoke only a few minutes, declaring that he had not come to speak to them; but to be with them, and pray that God might give them (he said "us") peace and show some way out of the blackness which had settled down upon them. He bade them not despair, however dark the cloud might be which had overshadowed them. They might be sure that God was beyond it and that He would give light in His own time. He was leading them now, as always—the presence of that assembly, with so many of the leading men of the city asking a conference, was in itself a proof of the great advance their cause had made. That cause was not, as some thought, so much money a day, but was the claim to justice and consideration and brotherly kindness. He himself was not a business man. He knew nothing of such matters. His duty was to preach—to preach peace—to preach the love of God—to preach patience and long-suffering and forgiveness, the teaching of his

Lord and master, who had lived in poverty all His life, without a place to lay His head, and had died calling on God to forgive His enemies.

This is a poor summary of what he said very simply but with a feeling and solemnity which touched the great audience, who suddenly crushed out every attempt to contradict his proposition. Something had transformed him so that I could scarcely recognize him. I asked myself, can this be John Marvel, this master of this great audience? What is the secret of his power? The only answer I could find was in his goodness, his sincerity, and sympathy.

"And now," he said in closing, "whatever happens, please God, I shall be with you and take my lot among you, and I ask you as a favor to me to listen to Dr. Capon."

There was a great uproar and shout; for Dr. Capon had, immediately after John Marvel got control of his audience, risen from his seat, seized his hat and coat and cane, and stalked with great majesty from the platform. There were, however, a number of other speeches, and although there was much noise and tumult, some advance was made; for a general, though by no means unanimous, opinion was shown in favor of something in the nature of a reconciliation.

As I glanced up after John Marvel returned amid the shouts to his seat, I saw Miss Leigh in one of the boxes leaning forward and looking with kindled eyes in our direction. Thinking that she was looking at me, and feeling very forgiving, I bowed to her, and it was only

when she failed to return my bow that I apprehended that she was not looking at me but at John Marvel. If she saw me she gave no sign of it; and when I walked the streets that night, strikes and strikers occupied but little of my thoughts. Unless I could make up with Eleanor Leigh, the whole world might go on strike for me. I determined to consult John Marvel. He had somehow begun to appear to me the sanest of advisers. I began to feel that he was, as Wolffert had once said of him, " a sort of Ark of the Covenant."

XXXIV

THE FLAG OF TRUCE

My acquaintance was now extending rapidly. I had discovered in the turgid tide that swept through the streets of the city other conditions and moods than those I first remarked: dark brooding shadows and rushing rapids catching the light, but fierce and deadly beneath; placid pools and sequestered eddies, far apart where the sunlight sifted in and lay soft on the drift that had escaped the flood, touching it with its magic and lending it its sweet radiance. I had found, indeed, that the city was an epitome of the world. It took a great many people to make it and there were other classes in it besides the rich and the poor. It was in one of these classes that I was beginning to find myself most at home.

I received one day an invitation to dine one evening the following week at the house of a gentleman whom I had met a week or two before and whom I had called on in response to an invitation unusually cordial. I had not been to a fashionable dinner since I had come to the West, and I looked forward with some curiosity to the company whom I should meet at Mr. Desport's, for I knew nothing about him except that I had met him in a law case and we had appeared to have a num-

ber of things in common, including objects of dislike, and further, that when I called on him he lived in a very handsome house, and I was received in one of the most charming libraries it was ever my good fortune to enter, and with a graciousness on the part of his wife which I had never known excelled. It was like stepping into another world to pass from the rush of the city into that atmosphere of refinement and culture.

My heart, however, was a little lower down than it should have been, for I could not but reflect with how much more pleasure I would have arrayed myself if it had been an invitation to Mr. Leigh's. In truth, the transition from my narrow quarters and the poverty of those among whom I had been living for some time, made this charming house appear to me the acme of luxury, and I was conscious of a sudden feeling, as I passed this evening through the ample and dignified hall into the sumptuous drawing-room, that somehow I was well fitted for such surroundings. Certainly I found them greatly to my taste. I was received again most graciously by Mrs. Desport, and as I had followed my provincial custom of coming a little ahead of time, I was the first visitor to arrive, a fact which I did not regret, as Mrs. Desport took occasion to tell me something of the guests whom she expected. After describing what I concluded to be a somewhat staid and elderly company, she added:

"I have given you a young lady whom I feel sure you will like. She is a little serious-minded, I think, and some people consider that she is simply posing; but

however eccentric she may be, I believe that she is really in earnest, and so does my husband; and I have never seen a young girl improve so much as she has done since she took up this new work of hers."

What this work was I was prevented from inquiring by the arrival of a number of guests all at once.

A dinner where the guests are not presented to each other differs in no important sense from a table-d'hôte dinner. The soup is likely to be a trifle colder and the guests a trifle more reserved—that is all. Mrs. Desport, however, followed the old-fashioned custom of introducing her guests to each other, preferring to open the way for them to feel at home, rather than to leave them floundering among inanities about the weather and their taste for opera. And though a lady, whom I presently sat next to, informed me that they did not do it "in England or even in New York now," I was duly grateful.

Having been presented to the company, I found them gay and full of animation, even though their conversation was inclined to be mainly personal and related almost exclusively to people with whom, for the most part, I had no acquaintance. The name of young Canter figured rather more extensively in it than was pleasant to me, and Dr. Capon was handled with somewhat less dignity than the cloth might have been supposed to require. I was, however, just beginning to enjoy myself when my attention was suddenly diverted by the sound of a voice behind me, as another guest arrived. I did not even need to turn to recognize Eleanor

Leigh, but when I moved around sufficiently to take a side glance at her, I was wholly unprepared for the vision before me. I seemed to have forgotten how charming she looked, and she broke on me like a fresh dawn after a storm. I do not know what I was thinking, or whether I was not merely just feeling, when my hostess came forward.

"Now we are all here. Mr. Glave, you are to take Miss Leigh in. You know her, I believe?"

I felt myself red and pale by turns and, glancing at Miss Leigh, saw that she, too, was embarrassed. I was about to stammer something when my hostess moved away, and as it appeared that the others had all paired off, there was nothing for me to do but accept the situation. As I walked over and bowed, I said in a low tone:

"I hope you will understand that I had no part in this. I did not know."

She evidently heard, for she made a slight bow and then drew herself up and took my arm.

"I should not have come," I added, "had I known of this. However, I suppose it is necessary that we should at least appear to be exchanging with ordinary interest the ordinary inanities of such an occasion."

She bowed, and then after a moment's silence added:

"I have nothing to say which could possibly interest you, and suggest that we do what I have heard has been done under similar circumstances, and simply count."

I thought of the molten metal pourable down an offender's throat. And with the thought came another: Did it mean that she was going to marry that young

"I suppose it is necessary that we should at least appear to be exchanging the ordinary inanities."

Canter? It was as if one who had entered Eden and discovered Eve, had suddenly found the serpent coiling himself between them.

"Very well." I was now really angry. I had hoped up to this time that some means for reconciliation might be found, but this dashed my hope. I felt that I was the aggrieved person, and I determined to prove to her that I would make no concession. I was not her slave. "Very well, then—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—nine, ten, eleven, twelve—thirteen," I said, looking straight ahead of me and dropping every syllable as if it were an oath. She gave me a barely perceptible side glance. I think I had taken her aback by my prompt compliance. She hesitated a moment.

"Or, as that is not very amusing, suppose we cap verses? I hear you know a great deal of poetry—Mr. Wolffert told me. I never knew any one with such a memory as his." I recognized the suggestion as a flag of truce.

I bowed, and as, of course, "Mary had a little lamb," was the first thing that popped into my head with its hint of personal application, I foolishly quoted the first verse, intending her to make the personal application.

She was prompt to continue it, with, I thought, a little sub-tone of mischief in her voice:

> "It followed her to school one day,
> Which was against the rule,"

she said demurely. There she stopped, so I took up the challenge.

"Which made the children laugh and say
'A lamb's a little fool.'"

It was a silly and inept ending, I knew as soon as I had finished—still, it conveyed my meaning.

She paused a moment and evidently started to look at me, but as evidently she thought better of it. She, however, murmured, "I thought we would quote verses, not make them."

I took this to be a confession that she was not able to make them, and I determined to show how much cleverer I was; so, without noticing the cut of the eye which told of her wavering, I launched out:

"There was a young lady of fashion,
Who, finding she'd made quite a mash on
A certain young swain,
Who built castles in Spain,
Fell straight in a terrible passion."

To this she responded with a promptness which surprised me:

"A certain young lady of fashion,
Had very good grounds for her passion,
It sprang from the pain
Of a terrible strain
On her friendship, and thus laid the lash on."

I felt that I must be equal to the situation, so I began rapidly:

"I'm sure the young man was as guiltless
As infant unborn and would wilt less
If thrown in the fire
Than under her ire——"

"Than under her ire," I repeated to myself. "Than under the ire"—what the dickens will rhyme with "wilt less"? We had reached the dining-room by this time and I could see that she was waiting with a provoking expression of satisfaction on her face over my having stalled in my attempt at a rhyme. I placed her in her chair and, as I took my own seat, a rhyme came to me—a poor one, but yet a rhyme:

"And since, Spanish castles he's built less,"

I said calmly as I seated myself, quite as if it had come easily.

"I was wondering how you'd get out of that," she said with a little smile which dimpled her cheek beguilingly. "You know you might have said,

"'And since, milk to weep o'er he's spilt less';

or even,

" 'And since, striped mosquitoes he's kilt less.'

Either would have made quite as good a rhyme and sense, too."

I did not dare let her see how true I thought this. It would never do to let her make fun of me. So I kept my serious air.

I determined to try a new tack and surprise her. I had a few shreds of Italian left from a time when I had studied the poets as a refuge from the desert dulness of my college course, and now having, in a pause, recalled the lines, I dropped, as though quite naturally, Dante's immortal wail:

"'Nessun maggior dolore
Che recordarci del tempo felice
Nella miseria.'"

I felt sure that this would at least impress her with my culture, while if by any chance she knew the lines, which I did not apprehend, it would impress her all the more and might prove a step toward a reconciliation.

For a moment she said nothing, then she asked quietly, "How does the rest of it go?"

She had me there, for I did not know the rest of the quotation.

"'E ciò sa il tuo dottore,'"

she said with a cut of her eye, and a liquid tone that satisfied me I had, as the saying runs, "stepped from the frying-pan into the fire."

She glanced at me with a smile in her eyes that reminded me, through I know not what subtle influence, of Spring, but as I was unresponsive she could not tell whether I was in earnest or was jesting.

I relapsed into silence and took my soup, feeling that I was getting decidedly the worst of it, when I heard her murmuring so softly as almost to appear speaking to herself:

"'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To talk of other things—
Of ships and shoes and sealing-wax,
And cabbages and Kings.'"

I glanced at her to find her eyes downcast, but a beguiling little dimple was flickering near the corners of

her mouth and her long lashes caught me all anew. My heart gave a leap. It happened that I knew my Alice much better than my Dante, so when she said, "You can talk, can't you?" I answered quietly, and quite as if it were natural to speak in verse :

" 'In my youth,' said his father, 'I took to the Law,
And argued each case with my wife,
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life.' "

She gave a little subdued gurgle of laughter as she took up the next verse:

" 'You are old,' said the youth. 'One would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever,
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?' "

I hoped that she was embarrassed when I found that she had taken my napkin by mistake, and she was undoubtedly so when she discovered that she had it.

"I beg your pardon," she said as she handed me hers.

I bowed.

With that, seeing my chance, I turned and spoke to the lady on my other side, with whom I was soon in an animated discussion, but my attention was not so engrossed by her that I did not get secret enjoyment out of the fact when I discovered that the elderly man on the other side of Miss Leigh was as deaf as a post and that she had to repeat every word that she said to him.

The lady on the other side of me was rambling on

about something, but just what, I had not the least idea (except that it related to the problem-novel, a form of literature that I detest), as I was soon quite engrossed in listening to the conversation between Eleanor Leigh and her deaf companion, in which my name, which appeared to have caught the gentleman's attention, was figuring to some extent.

"Any relation to my old friend, Henry Glave?" I heard him ask in what he doubtless imagined to be a whisper.

"Yes, I think so," said Miss Leigh.

"You say he is not?"

"No, I did not say so; I think he is."

"He is a fine lawyer," I heard him say, and I was just pluming myself on the rapid extension of my reputation, when he added, "He is an old friend of your father's, I know. I was glad to hear he had come up to represent your father in his case against those rascals.—A friend of yours, too," were the next words I heard, for decency required me to appear to be giving some attention to my other neighbor, whom I devoutly wished in Ballyhac, so I was trying resolutely, though with but indifferent success, to keep my attention on the story she was telling about some one whom, like Charles Lamb, I did not know, but was ready to damn at a venture.

"He told me he came on your account, as much as on your father's," said the gentleman, rallyingly. "You had better look out. These old bachelors are very susceptible. No fool like an old fool, you know."

To this Miss Eleanor made some laughing reply, from

which I gathered that her neighbor was a bachelor himself, for he answered in the high key which he mistook for a whisper:

"You had better not say that to me, for if you do, I'll ask you to marry me before the dessert."

I was recalled to myself by my other neighbor, who had been talking steadily, asking me suddenly, and in a tone which showed she demanded an answer:

"What do you think of that?"

"Why, I think it was quite natural," I said.

"You do?"

"Yes, I do," I declared firmly.

"You think it was natural for him to run off with his own daughter-in-law!" Her eyes were wide with astonishment.

"Well, not precisely natural, but—under the circumstances, you see, it was certainly more natural than for him to run off with his mother-in-law—you will have to admit that."

"I admit nothing of the kind," she declared, with some heat. "I am a mother-in-law myself, and I must say I think the jibes at mothers-in-law are very uncalled for."

"Oh! now you put me out of court," I said. "I did not mean to be personal. Of course, there are mothers-in-law and mothers-in-law."

Happily, at this moment the gentleman on her other side insisted on securing her attention, and I turned just in time to catch the dimples of amusement that were playing in Eleanor Leigh's face. She had evidently heard my mistake.

"Oh! he is so deaf!" she murmured, half turning to me, though I was not quite sure that she was not speaking to herself. The next second she settled the question. "He is so distressingly deaf," she repeated in an undertone, with the faintest accent of appeal for sympathy in her voice. I again recognized the flag of truce. But I replied calmly :

> "I passed by his garden and marked with one eye
> How the owl and the panther were sharing a pie.
> The panther took pie-crust and gravy and meat,
> While the owl had the dish as its share of the treat."

The color mantled in her cheek and she raised her head slightly.

"Are you going to keep that up? I suppose we shall have to talk a little. I think we are attracting attention. For Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud! We are being observed."

But I continued :

> "When the pie was all finished, the owl, as a boon,
> Was kindly permitted to pocket the spoon."

'It is very rude of you to go on in that way when I am speaking. You remind me of a machine," she smiled. "Here am I stuck between two men, one of whom cannot hear a word I say, while the other does nothing but run on like a machine." I observed, with deep content, that she was becoming exasperated.

At that moment the hostess leant forward and said: "What are you two so interested in discussing there?

I have been watching, and you have not stopped a minute."

Eleanor Leigh burst into a laugh. "Mr. Glave is talking Arabic to me."

"Arabic!" exclaimed the hostess. "Mr. Glave, you have been in the East, have you?"

"Yes, he came from the East where the wise men always come from," said Miss Leigh. Then turning to me she said in an undertone, "You see what I told you."

For reply, I simply quoted on, though I had a little pang as I saw the shadow come into her eyes and the smile leave her mouth.

> "My father was deaf,
> And my mother was dumb,
> And to keep myself company,
> I beat the drum."

"I think that was a very good occupation for you," she said, turning away, with her head very high.

"Will you let me say something to you?" she said in a low tone a moment later, and, without waiting, she added:

"I think it was rather nasty in me to say what I said to you when you first came in, but you had treated me so rudely when I spoke to you on the street."

"You do not call it rude not to answer a letter when a gentleman writes to explain an unfortunate mistake, and then cut him publicly?"

"I did not receive it until afterward," she said. "I was away from town, and as to cutting you—I don't know what you are talking about."

"At the Charity Fair."

"I never saw you. I wondered you were not there."

Had the earth opened, I could not have felt more astounded, and had it opened near me I should possibly have sprung in in my confusion. I had, as usual, simply made a fool of myself, and what to do I scarcely knew. At this instant the hostess arose, and the dinner was over and with it I feared my chance was over too.

"Give me a moment. I must have one moment," I said as she passed me on her way out of the dining-room with the other ladies, her head held very high.

She inclined her head and said something in so low a tone that I did not catch it.

King James I. never detested tobacco as I did those cigars smoked that evening. When, at last, the host moved to return to the drawing-room, I bolted in only to be seized on by my hostess and presented to a middle-aged and waistless lady who wanted to ask me about the Pooles, whom she had heard I knew. She had heard that Lilian Poole had not married very happily. "Did I know?"

"No, I did not know," nor, in fact, did I care, though I could not say so. Then another question: "Could I tell why all the men appeared to find Miss Leigh so very attractive?" Yes, I thought I could tell that—"Because she is very attractive."

"Oh well, yes, I suppose she is—pretty and all that, with a sort of kitteny softness—but——"

"There is no 'but' about it," I interrupted brusquely —"she is just what you said—very attractive. For one

thing, she has brains; for another, heart. Neither of them is so common as not to be attractive." I thought of the young tigress concealed in that "kitteny softness" of which the lady spoke, and was determined not to permit the sly cat to see what I really felt.

"Of course, you know that she is going to marry Mr. Canter? He is the best *parti* in town."

"Of course, I do not know anything of the kind," I said bowing. "Since I had the honor of sitting by her I am thinking of marrying her myself."

"I know it. They all fall at the first encounter!" exclaimed the lady, and I saw she had no humor, and decided to hedge. "I only mean that I do not believe Miss Leigh would marry Mr. Canter or any one else for his money, or for any other reason except the best."

Finally, having escaped from her, I was just making my way toward Miss Leigh, who had been standing up talking to two men who on entering the room had promptly sought her out, when a servant entered and spoke to the hostess, who immediately crossed over and gave his message to Miss Leigh. "Mr. James Canter has called for you; must you go?"

"Yes, I fear I must." So with hardly a glance at me she passed out, leaving the room so dark that I thought the lights had been dimmed, but I discovered that it was only that Miss Eleanor Leigh had left. I could not in decency leave at once, though I confess the place had lost its charm for me, especially since I learned that Miss Leigh's escort for the ball was Mr. James Canter. I had other reasons than jealousy for preferring that he

should not be Eleanor Leigh's escort. In my meditations that night as I walked the streets, Mr. James Canter held a somewhat conspicuous place.

James Canter was possibly the most attentive of all the beaux Miss Leigh had, and they were more numerous than I at that time had any idea of. He was prospectively among the wealthiest young men in the city, for his father, who idolized him, was one of the largest capitalists in the State. He was, as the stout lady had said, certainly esteemed by ambitious mammas among the most advantageous *partis* the city could boast of. And he was of all, without doubt, the most talked of. Moreover, he had many friends, was lavish in the expenditure of his money beyond the dream of extravagance, and what was called, not without some reason, a good fellow. Before I met him I had already had a glimpse of him as he "bucked" against his rival, Count Pushkin, on the night when, dejected and desperate, I, in a fit of weakness, went into the gambling-house determined to stake my last dollar on the turn of the wheel, and the sight of Pushkin saved me. But it was after I met him that I came to know what the pampered young man was. I was beginning now to be thrown with some of the lawyers and this had led to further acquaintances, among them young Canter. At first, I rather liked him personally, for he was against Pushkin and his gay manner was attractive. He was good-looking enough after the fleshly kind—a big, round, blondish man, only he was too fat and at twenty-eight had the waist and jowl of a man of forty who had had too many dinners

and drunk too much champagne. But when I came to know him I could not see that he had a shred of principle of any kind whatsoever. His reputation among his friends was that had he applied himself to business, he would have made a reputation equal to his father's, which was that of a shrewd, far-sighted, cool-headed man of business who could "see a dollar as far as the best of them," but that he was squandering his talents in sowing a crop of wild oats so plentiful that it was likely to make a hole even in his father's accumulated millions, and its reaping might be anywhere between the poor-house and the grave. I knew nothing of this at the time, and after I came to know him as I did later, my judgment of him took form from the fact that I discovered he not only did not tell the truth, but had lost the power even to recognize it. Still, I think my real appraisement of him came when I discovered that he was paying assiduous attentions to Miss Leigh. I could not help remarking the frequency with which I found his name in juxtaposition with hers in the published accounts of social functions, where "Mr. Canter led the cotillion with Miss Leigh," or "Mr. Canter drove his coach with Miss Leigh on the box seat," etc., etc., and as my acquaintance began to extend among the young men about town, I heard more than occasional conjectures as to their future. It appeared to be accepted rather as a matter of course that the result lay entirely with the young man. It was a view that I fiercely rejected in my heart, but I could say nothing beyond a repudiation of such a view in general.

In view of my knowledge of Mr. Canter, it was natural enough that I should be enraged to find him the escort of Eleanor Leigh, and I fear my temper rather showed itself in the conversation which took place and which soon became general, partly because of the earnestness with which I expressed my views on the next subject that came up. The two or three young girls of the company had left at the same time with Miss Leigh, and the ladies who remained were, for the most part, married women of that indefinite age which follows youth after a longer or shorter interval. They had all travelled and seen a good deal of the world, and they knew a good deal of it; at least, some of them did and they thought that they knew more than they actually did know.

They agreed with more unanimity than they had yet shown on any subject that America was hopelessly bourgeois. Listening to them, I rather agreed with them.

"Take our literature, our stage, our novels," said one, a blonde lady of some thirty-five years, though she would, possibly, have repudiated a lustrum and a half of the measure.

"You differentiate the literature and the novels?" I interrupted.

"Yes. I might—but—I mean the lot. How provincial they are!"

"Yes, they appear so. Well?"

"They do not dare to discuss anything large and vital."

"Oh! yes, they dare. They are daring enough, but they don't know how—they are stupid."

"No, they are afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?"

"Of public opinion—of the bourgeois so-called virtue of the middle class who control everything."

"That is the only valid argument I ever heard in favor of the bourgeois," I said.

"What do you mean? Don't you agree with me?"

"I certainly do not. I may not seek virtue and ensue it; but at least I revere it."

"Do you mean that you think we should not write or talk of anything—forbidden?"

"That depends on what you mean by forbidden. If you mean——"

"I think there should be no subject forbidden," interrupted the lady by whom I had sat at table, a stout and tightly laced person of some forty summers. "Why shouldn't I talk of any subject I please?" She seemed to appeal to me, so I answered her.

"I do not at this instant think of any reason except that it might not be decent."

This raised an uncertain sort of laugh and appeared for a moment to stagger her; but she was game, and rallied.

"I know—that is the answer I always get."

"Because it is the natural answer."

"But I want to know why? Why is it indecent?"

"Simply because it is. Indecent means unseemly. Your sex were slaves, they were weaker physically, less

robust; they were made beasts of burden, were beaten and made slaves. Then men, for their own pleasure, lifted them up a little and paid court to them, and finally the idea and age of chivalry came—based on the high Christian morality. You were placed on a pinnacle. Men loved and fought for your favor and made it the guerdon of their highest emprise, guarded you with a mist of adoration, gave you a halo, worshipped you as something cleaner and better and purer than themselves; built up a wall of division and protection for you. Why should you go and cast it down, fling it away, and come down in the mire and dust and dirt?"

"But I don't want to be adored—set up on a pedestal."

"Then you probably will not be," interrupted my deaf neighbor.

"I want to be treated as an equal—as an—an—intelligent being."

"I should think that would depend on yourself. I do not quite understand whom you wish to be the equal of—of men? Men are a very large class—some are very low indeed."

"Oh! You know what I mean—of course, I don't mean that sort."

"You mean gentlemen?"

"Certainly."

"Then I assure you you cannot discuss indecent subjects in mixed company; gentlemen never do. Nor write coarse books—gentlemen never do nowadays—nor discuss them either."

"Do you mean to say that great novelists never discuss such questions?" she demanded triumphantly.

"No, but it is all in the manner—the motive. I have no objection to the matter—generally, provided it be properly handled—but the obvious intention—the rank indecentness of it. See how Scott or George Eliot, or Tolstoi or Turgénieff, or, later on, even Zola, handles such vital themes. How different their motive from the reeking putrescence of the so-called problem-novel."

"Oh! dear! they must be very bad indeed!" exclaimed a lady, shocked by the sound of my adjectives.

"They are," suddenly put in my oldest neighbor, who had been listening intently with his hand behind his ear, "only you ladies don't know how bad they are or you would not discuss them with men."

This closed the discussion and a group of ladies near me suddenly branched off into another subject and one which interested me more than the discussion of such literature as the trash which goes by the name of the problem novel.

"Who is Eleanor Leigh in love with?" asked some one irrelevantly—a Mrs. Arrow—whose mind appeared much given to dwelling on such problems. She addressed the company generally, and possibly my former neighbor at the table in particular.

"Is she in love?" asked another.

"Certainly, I never saw any one so changed. Why, she has been moping so I scarcely know her—and she has taken to charity. That's a sure sign. I think it must be that young preacher she talks so much about."

"Well, I don't know who she is in love with," said the lady who had sat next to me at dinner, "but I know who she is going to marry. She is going to marry Jim Canter. Her aunt has made that match."

"Oh! do you think so?" demanded our hostess, who had joined the group. "I don't believe she will marry any one she is not in love with, and I can't believe she is in love with that fat, coarse, dissipated creature. He is simply repulsive to me."

I began to conceive an even higher opinion of my hostess than I had already had.

"I don't think it is anybody," continued our hostess.

"Oh! yes, you do—you think it is Doctor Capon."

"Doctor Capon! It is much more likely to be Mr. Marvel."

"Mr. Marvel! Who is he?—Oh, yes, the young preacher who turned Jew and was put out of his church. I remember now."

"Is Mr. Marvel a Jew?" I inquired. "Oh! yes, indeed, and a terrible Socialist."

"Ah, I did not know that."

"I heard she was going to marry a Jew," interjected another lady corroboratively, "but I must say it looks very much like Mr. Canter to me."

"Oh! she wouldn't marry a Jew?" suggested Mrs. Arrow. "I heard there was a young lawyer or something."

"She would if she'd a mind to," said our hostess.

"I still stand by Doctor Capon," declared Mrs. Arrow. "He is so refined."

"And I by Jim Canter—I thought at one time it was

Count Pushkin; but since Milly McSheen has taken him away, the other seems to be the winning card. I must say I think the count would have been the better match of the two."

"I don't think that," exclaimed the other lady. "And neither would you, if you knew him."

"Possibly, she knows the other," I suggested.

"Oh! no—you see she could get rid of the count, if he proved too objectionable, and then she would still have the title."

"I never heard a more infamous proposal," I said in an aside to our hostess. She laughed. "No, did you—but she was only jesting——"

"Not she!" I was in no mood to tolerate jesting on the subject of Eleanor Leigh's marriage. My aside to our hostess drew the attention of the others to me, and Mrs. Arrow suddenly said, "Mr. Glave, which would you say? You know them both, don't you?"

"I do."

"Well, which would you say?"

"Neither," said I. I wanted to add that I would cheerfully murder them both before I would allow either of them to destroy Eleanor Leigh's life; but I contented myself with my brief reply.

"Oh! Mr. Glave is evidently one of her victims," laughed our hostess, for which I was grateful to her.

I came away from my friend's with the heroic determination to prevent Miss Leigh's life from being ruined and to accomplish this by the satisfactory method of capturing her myself. My resolve was a little

dampened by reading in a newspaper next day the head-lines announcing an "Important Engagement," which though no names were used pointed clearly at Miss Leigh and the hopeful heir and partner of Mr. James Canter, Sr. Reading carefully the article, I found that the engagement was only believed to exist. I felt like a reprieved criminal.

He who has not felt the pangs of a consuming passion has no conception of the true significance of life. The dull, cold, indifferent lover knows nothing of the half-ecstatic anguish of the true lover or the wholly divine joy of reconciliation even in anticipation. As well may the frozen pole dream of the sun-bathed tropic. It was this joy that I hugged in my heart even in face of the declaration of her expected engagement.

Next day I was talking to two or three young fellows when Canter and some episode in which he had figured as rather more defiant than usual of public opinion, came up, and one of them said to another, a friend of his and an acquaintance of mine, "What is Jim going to do when he gets married? He'll have to give up his 'friends' then. He can't be running two establishments."

"Oh! Jim ain't going to get married. He's just fooling around."

"Bet you—the old man's wild for it."

"Bet you—not now. He can't. Why, that woman—"

"Oh! he can pension her off."

"Her?—which her?"

"Well, all of 'em. If he don't get married soon, he won't be fit to marry."

It was here that I entered the conversation. They had not mentioned any name—they had been too gentlemanly to do so. But I knew whom they had in mind, and I was inwardly burning.

"He isn't fit to marry now," I said suddenly.

"What!" They both turned to me in surprise.

"No man who professes to be in love with any good woman," I said, "and lives as he lives is fit for any woman to marry. I am speaking generally," I added, to guard against the suspicion that I knew whom they referred to. "I know Mr. Canter but slightly; but what I say applies to him too."

"Oh! you'd cut out a good many," laughed one of the young men with a glance at his friend.

"No, gentlemen, I stand on my proposition. The man who is making love to a pure woman with a harlot's kisses on his lips is not worthy of either. He ought to be shot."

"There'd be a pretty big exodus if your views were carried out," said one of them.

"Well, I don't want to pose as any saint. I am no better than some other men; but, at least, I have some claim to decency, and that is fundamental. Your two-establishment gentry are no more nor less than a lot of thorough-paced blackguards."

They appeared to be somewhat impressed by my earnestness, even though they laughed at it. "There are a good many of them," they said. "Your friends, the Socialists——"

"Yes. I know. The ultra-Socialist's views I repro-

bate, but, at least, he is sincere. He is against any formal hard and fast contract, and his motive is, however erroneous, understandable. He believes it would result in an uplift—in an increase of happiness for all. He is, of course, hopelessly wrong. But here is a man who is debasing himself and others—all others—and, above all, the one he is pretending to exalt above all. I say he is a low-down scoundrel to do it. He is prostituting the highest sentiment man has ever imagined."

"Well, at any rate, you are vehement," said one.

"You've cut Jim out," said the other.

The conversation took place in a sort of lounging-room adjoining a down-town café frequented by young men. At this moment who should walk in but Mr. James Canter himself. The talk ceased as suddenly as cut-off steam, and when one of the young men after an awkward silence made a foolish remark about the fine day, which was in reality rainy and cold, Canter's curiosity was naturally excited.

"What were you fellows talking about? Women?"

"No," said one of the others—"nothing particular."

"Yes!" I said, "we were—talking about women."

"Whose women?"

"Yours." I looked him steadily in the eye.

He started, but recovered himself.

"Which of 'em?" he inquired as he flung himself into a chair and looked around for a match for the cigarette which he took from a jewel-studded gold case. "I am rather well endowed with them at present. What were you saying?"

I repeated my remark about the two-establishment gentry. His face flushed angrily; but my steady eye held him in check and he took a long, inhaling breath.

"Well, I don't give a blank what you think about it, or anything else." He expelled the smoke from his lungs.

"Perhaps—but that does not affect the principle. It stands. You may not care about the Rock of Gibraltar; but it stands and is the key to the situation."

He was in a livid rage, and I was prepared for the attack which I expected him to make; but he restrained himself. His forte was insolence.

"You teach Sunday-school, don't you?"

I thought this was a reference to one whose name I did not mean his lips to sully, and I determined to forestall him.

"I do," I said quietly. "I teach for Mr. Marvel."

"I know—the psalm-singing parson who has made all that trouble in this town—he and his Jew partner. We are going to break them up."

"Both are men whose shoes you are not fit to clean; and as to making trouble, the trouble was made by those a good deal nearer you than John Marvel—your precious firm and your side-partners—Coll McSheen and David Wringman."

"Well, you'd better confine your labors to your dirty Jews and not try to interfere in the affairs of gentlemen."

"As to the latter, I never interfere in the affairs of

gentlemen, and as to the dirty Jews, I assure you they are not as dirty as you are; for their dirt is all outside while yours is within."

I had supposed he would resent this, but he had his reasons for not doing so, though they were none too creditable to him. Mr. Canter was too bold with women and not bold enough with men. And a little later it transpired that with one woman, at least, he was as tame as he was with the other sex. The woman the young men referred to kept him in fear of his life for years, and he had neither the physical nor moral courage to break away from her.

XXXV

MR. LEIGH HAS A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE MADE HIM

Though I had not acted on the principle, I had always felt that a young man had no right to pay his addresses to a young lady without giving some account of himself to her father, or whoever might stand in the relation of her natural protector; certainly that it was incumbent on a gentleman to do so. I felt, therefore, that it was necessary for me before proceeding further in my pursuit of Eleanor Leigh to declare my intention to her father. My declaration to her had been the result of a furious impulse to which I had yielded; but now that I had cooled, my principle reasserted itself. One trouble was that I did not know Mr. Leigh. I determined to consult John Marvel, and I had a sneaking hope that he might not think it necessary for me to speak about it to him. I accordingly went around to his room and after he had gotten through with a tramp or two, who had come to bleed him of any little pittance which he might have left, he came in. I bolted into the middle of my subject.

"John, I am in love." I fancied that his countenance changed slightly—I thought, with surprise.

"Yes. I know you are."

"How did you know it? I am in love with Eleanor Leigh." His countenance changed a shade more, and he looked away and swallowed with a little embarrassment.

"Yes. I know that too."

"How did you know it?"

He smiled. John sometimes smiled rather sadly.

"I want you to help me."

"How?"

"I don't know. I have to go and ask Mr. Leigh."

"What! Has she accepted you?" His face was, as I recalled later, full of feeling of some kind.

"No. I wish to Heaven she had! If anything, she has rejected me,—but that is nothing. I am going to win her and marry her. I am going to ask her father's permission to pay my addresses to her, and then I don't care whether he gives it or not.—Yes, I do care, too; but whether he does or not I am going to win her and him and marry her."

"Henry," he said gently, "you deserve to win her, and I believe, maybe—if—" He went off into a train of reflection, which I broke in on.

"I don't think I do," I said honestly, sobered by his gentleness; "but that makes no difference. I love her better than all the rest of the world, and I mean to win her or die trying. So, none of your 'maybes' and 'ifs'. I want your advice how to proceed. I have not a cent in the world; am, in fact, in debt; and I feel that I must tell her father so."

"That will scarcely tend to strengthen your chances with him," said John. My spirits rose.

"I can't help that. I feel that I must tell him!" Though I spoke so grandly, my tone contained a query.

"Yes, that's right," said John decisively. His mind had been working slowly. My spirits drooped.

I was not conscious till then how strongly I had hoped that he might disagree with me. My heart quite sank at the final disappearance of my hope. But I was in for it now. My principle was strong enough when strengthened by John's invincible soundness.

I walked into the building in which Mr. Leigh had his offices, boldly enough. If my heart thumped, at least, I had myself well in hand. The clerk to whom I addressed myself said he was not in, but was expected in shortly. Could he do anything for me? No, I wanted to see Mr. Leigh personally. Would I take a seat?

I took a chair, but soon made up my mind that if I sat there five minutes I would not be able to speak. I sat just one minute. At least, that was the time my watch registered, though I early discovered that there was no absolute standard of the divisions of time. The hands of a clock may record with regularity the revolutions of the earth, the moon, or the stars; but not the passage of time as it affects the human mind. The lover in his mistress' presence, and the lover waiting for his mistress, or for that matter, for her father, has no equal gauge of measurement of Time's passage. With the one the winged sandals of Mercury were not

so fleet, with the other, the leaden feet of Chronos were not so dull.

I decided that I must get out into the air; so, mumbling something to the surprised clerk about returning shortly, I bolted from the office and walked around the block. As I look back at it now, I was a rather pitiable object. I was undoubtedly in what, if I were speaking and not writing, I should call "the deuce of a funk"; but for the sake of fine English, I will term it a panic. My heart was beating, my mouth was dry, my knees were weak. I came very near darting off every time I reached a corner, and I should certainly have done so but for the knowledge that if I did I should never get up the courage to come back again. So I stuck and finally screwed up my courage to return to the office; but every object and detail in those streets through which I passed that morning are fastened in my mind as if they had been stamped there by a stroke of lightning.

When I walked in again the clerk said, Yes, Mr. Leigh had returned. Would I take a seat for a moment? I sat down in what was a chair of torture. A man under certain stress is at a great disadvantage in a chair. If he be engaged in reflection, the chair is a proper place for him; but if in action, he should stand. Every moment was an added burden for me to carry, which was not lightened when young Canter walked out of the office and with a surly glance at me passed on.

The clerk took my card, entered the door, and closed it after him. I heard a dull murmur of voices within,

and then after what appeared to me an interminable wait, he reappeared and silently motioned me in. I hated him for months for that silent gesture. It seemed like Fate.

As I entered, a man past middle age with a strong face, a self-contained mouth and jaw, a calm brow, and keen eyes glanced up from a note he was writing and said:

"Excuse me a moment if you please. Won't you take a seat?"

I sat with the perspiration breaking out as I watched the steady run of his pen over the sheet. I felt as a criminal must who watches the judge preparing to pass sentence. At length he was through. Then he turned to me.

"Well, Mr. Glave?"

I plunged at once into my subject.

"Mr. Leigh, I am a young lawyer here, and I have come to ask your permission to pay my addresses to your daughter."

"Wha-t!" His jaw positively fell, he was so surprised. But I did not give him time.

"I have no right to ask it—to ask any favor of you, much less a favor which I feel is the greatest any man can ask at your hands. But I—love her—and—I—I simply ask that you will give me your consent to win her if I can." I was very frightened, but my voice had steadied me, and I was gazing straight in his eyes.

"Does my daughter know of this extraor—of this?" He asked the question very slowly, and his eyes were holding mine.

"I hardly know what she may divine. I told her once that I thought a gentleman should not—should not try to marry a gir—a lady until he had asked her father's permission, and she is so clear-minded that I hardly know——"

"Does she know of your attachment?"

"Yes, sir. I mean, I told her once—I——"

"I thought you said you thought a gentleman had no right to speak to her until he had gained her father's consent!" A slight scorn had crept into his face.

"Yes, sir, I did—something like that, though not quite that—but——"

"How then do you reconcile the two?" He spoke calmly, and I observed a certain likeness to his daughter.

"I do not—I cannot. I do not try. I only say that in my cooler moments my principle is stronger than my action. I gave way to my feelings once, and declared myself, but when I got hold of myself I felt I should come to you and give you some account of myself."

"I see." I began to hope again, as he reflected.

"Does my daughter reciprocate this—ah—attachment?

"No, sir. I wish to God she did; but I hope that possibly in time—I might prevail on her by my devotion." I was stammering along awkwardly enough.

"Ah!"

"I am only asking your permission to declare myself her suitor to try to win—what I would give the world to win, if I had it. I have no hope except that which comes from my devotion, and my determination to win.

I have nothing in the world except my practice; but mean to succeed." I had got more confidence now. I went on to give him an account of myself, and I tried to tell him the truth, though doubtless I gave myself the natural benefit of a friendly historian. I told him frankly of my unfortunate experience in the matter of the contribution to the *Trumpet*—though I did not conceal my views on the main subject, of the corporation's relation to the public. I must say that Mr. Leigh appeared an interested auditor, though he did not help me out much. At the end, he said:

"Mr. Glave, I have some confidence in my daughter, sufficient—I may say—to have decided for some time back to allow her to manage her own affairs, and unless there were some insuperable objection in any given case, I should not interfere. This is one of the vital affairs in life in which a man has to fight his own battle. I refer you to my daughter. If there were an insuperable objection, of course I should interfere." I wondered if he knew of Canter, and took some hope from his words.

The only thing that gave me encouragement was that he said, just as I was leaving:

"Mr. Glave, I used to know your father, I believe. We were at college together." I think I must have shown some feeling in my face, for he added, "We were very good friends," and held out his hand. I came away drenched with perspiration; but I felt that I had made a step in the direction of winning Eleanor Leigh, and almost as if I had gained a friend. At least, I

liked him, as self-contained as he was, for he looked at times like his daughter.

That evening Miss Leigh observed something unusual in her father's expression, and finally, after waiting a little while for him to disclose what he had on his mind, she could stand it no longer.

"Dad, what is it?" she demanded.

Mr. Leigh gazed at her quizzically.

"Well, I have had a rather strenuous day. In the first place, I got a letter from Henry Glave." Miss Eleanor's eyes opened.

"From Henry Glave! What in the world is he writing to you about?"

"He has offered me assistance," said Mr. Leigh. He took from his pocket a letter, and tossed it across the table to her, observing her with amusement as her expression changed. It, possibly, was not the Henry Glave she had had in mind.

As she read, her face brightened. "Isn't that fine! I thought he would—" She stopped suddenly.

"You wrote to him?" said Mr. Leigh.

"Yes, but I didn't know he would. I only asked his advice—I thought maybe, he possibly might—knowing how he liked you. This will help us out? You will accept his offer, of course?"

Mr. Leigh nodded. "I am considering it. It was certainly very good in him. Not every man is as grateful these times. My only question is whether I ought to accept his offer."

"Why not?"

Mr. Leigh did not answer for a moment, he was deep in reflection, reviewing a past in which two older men who bore my name had borne a part, and was trying to look forward into the future. Presently he replied:

"Well, the fact is, I am very hard pressed."

For answer Eleanor sprang up and ran around to him, and throwing her arm about his neck, kissed him. "You poor, dear old dad. I knew you were in trouble; but I did not like to urge you till you got ready. Tell me about it."

Mr. Leigh smiled. It was a patronizing way she had with him which he liked while he was amused by it.

"Yes. I'm—the fact is, I'm pretty near—" He paused and reflected; then began again, "What would you say if I were to tell you that I am almost at the end of my resources?"

The girl's countenance fell for a second, then brightened again almost immediately.

"I shouldn't mind it a bit, except for you."

Mr. Leigh heaved a sigh which might have been a sigh of relief.

"You don't know what it means, my dear."

"Oh! Yes, I do."

"No-o. It means giving up—everything. Not only all luxuries; but—" He gazed about him at the sumptuous surroundings in his dining-room, "but all this—everything. Horses, carriages, servants, pictures —everything. Do you understand?"

"Everything?" Eleanor's voice and look betrayed that she was a little startled.

"Yes," said her father with a nod and a sigh. "If I assign, it would all have to go, and we should have to begin afresh."

"Very well. I am ready. Of course, I don't want to be broke; but I am ready. Whatever you think is right. And I would rather give up everything—everything, than have you worried as you have been for ever so long. I have seen it."

"Nelly, you are a brick," said her father fondly, looking at her in admiration. "How did you ever happen to be your Aunt Sophy's niece?"

"Her half-niece," corrected the girl, smiling.

"It was the other half," mused Mr. Leigh.

"Tell me about it, father. How did it come? When did it happen?" she urged, smoothing tenderly the hair on his brow.

"It didn't happen. It came. It has been coming for a long time. It is the conditions——"

"I know, those dreadful conditions. How I hate to hear the word! We used to get them when we were at Miss de Pense's school,—we had to work them off—and now people are always talking about them."

"Well, these conditions," said Mr. Leigh smiling, "seem a little more difficult to work off. I am rated as belonging to the capitalists and as opposed to the working class. The fact is I am not a capitalist; for my properties are good only while in active use, all my available surplus has gone into their betterment for the

public use, and I am a harder-worked man than any laborer or workman in one of my shops or on one of my lines."

"That you are!" exclaimed his daughter.

"I belong to the class that produces, and we are ground between the upper and the nether millstones. Do you see?"

Eleanor expressed her assent.

"The fire, of course, cost us a lot."

"It was set on fire," interrupted his daughter. "I know it."

"Well, I don't know—possibly. It looks so. Anyhow, it caught us at the top notch, and while the insurance amounts to something, the actual loss was incalculable. Then came the trouble with the bank. So long as I was there they knew they could not go beyond the law. So Canter and the others got together, and I got out, and, of course——"

"I know," said his daughter.

"They asked me to remain, but—I preferred to be free."

"So do I."

"I had an overture to-day from the Canters," said Mr. Leigh, after a moment of reflection. "I do not quite know what it means, but I think I do."

"What was it?" Eleanor looked down with her face slightly averted.

"Jim Canter came from his father to propose—to suggest a *modus vivendi*, as it were. It means that they have started a blaze they cannot extinguish—that

they are having trouble with their people, and fear that our people are coming around, but it means something further, too, I think." Mr. Leigh ceased talking, and appeared to be reflecting.

"What?" said the girl, after waiting a moment.

"You know—your aunt—however—" He paused.

She rose and faced him.

"Father, I wouldn't marry him to save his life—and I have told both him and Aunt Sophia so." Mr. Leigh gave a sigh of relief.

"You, of course, declined the proposal they made?" said Eleanor.

"I did—I think they have broken with the Argand interest. I saw your aunt to-day, and had a talk with her. I think her eyes are opened at last. I told her a few plain truths."

He dropped into reflection and a quizzical expression came into his eyes.

"I had a very remarkable thing happen to me to-day."

"What was it?" demanded his daughter.

"I had an offer of marriage made me."

Eleanor Leigh's face changed—at first it grew a shade whiter, then a shade redder.

"I know who it was," she said quickly.

"Oh!" Mr. Leigh shut his lips firmly. "I did not know."

"She is a cat! She has been sending me flowers and opera tickets all winter, and deluging me with invitations. I knew she was up to something." She

spoke with growing feeling, as her father's eyes rested on her placidly with an amused expression in them. "I wouldn't be such easy game. Why, dad, she'd bore you to death—and as to me, I wouldn't live in the house with her—I couldn't." She stood with mantling cheek and flashing eye, a young Amazon girded for battle.

"I will relieve you," said her father. "It is not the feline-natured lady you have in mind; but a person quite different." Miss Eleanor looked relieved.

"Dad—it couldn't be—it was not Aunt Sophia? That would explain a lot of things. You know I think she's been laying some snares lately. She even forgave me when I told her the other evening that that was the last time I would ever accept an invitation from Mr. Canter, even as a favor to her. Dad, she'd make you miserable. You couldn't."

"No," said Mr. Leigh. "In fact, it was not a lady at all. It was a person of the opposite sex, and the proposal was for your hand."

"Dad! Who was it? Now, dad." She moved around the table to him, as Mr. Leigh, with eyes twinkling over his victory, shut his mouth firmly. "Dad, you'd just as well tell me at once, for you know I am going to know, so you might as well tell me and save yourself trouble. Who was it?"

Mr. Leigh took her firmly by the arms and seated her on his knee.

"Well, it was a young man who appeared quite in earnest."

"It wasn't—no, I know it wasn't he—he wouldn't have done that—and it wasn't—" (she pondered) "no, it wasn't he—and it wasn't—" She suddenly paused. "Tell me, what did he say? How did you like him? What did you say to him?"

"So you have settled who it is. Perhaps, you sent him to me?"

"Indeed, I did not, and I don't know who it was. What did you tell him?"

"I told him you were of age——"

"I am not. I am twenty."

"No, I told him you were too young—to think of such a thing——"

"I am twenty," repeated the girl.

"That is what I told him," said Mr. Leigh, "and that I thought you were able to take care of yourself."

The girl rested her chin on his head and went off in a reverie.

"Dad, we must hold together," she said. Her father drew her face down and kissed her silently. "The man who takes you away from me will have to answer with his life," he said.

"There is no one on earth who could," said Eleanor.

XXXVI

THE RIOT AND ITS VICTIM

It is a terrible thing for a man with a wife and children to see them wasting away with sheer starvation, to hear his babes crying for bread and his wife weeping because she cannot get it for them. Some men in such a situation drown their sorrow in drink; others take a bolder course, and defy the law or the rules of their order.

The Railway Company, still being forced to run their cars, undertook to comply with the requirement, even though the protection of the police was withheld. The police were instructed, indeed, to be present and keep the peace, and a few were detailed, but it was known to both sides that no real protection would be granted. Coll McSheen's order to the force bore this plainly on its face—so plainly that the conservative papers roundly denounced him for his hypocrisy, and for the first time began to side decisively with the company.

The offer of increased wages to new men was openly scouted by the strikers generally. But in a few houses the situation was so terrible that the men yielded. One of these was the empty and fireless home of McNeil. The little Scotchman had had a bitter experience and had come through it victorious; but just as he was get-

ting his head above water, the new strike had come—against his wishes and his vote. He had held on as long as he could—had held on till every article had gone—till his wife's poor under raiment and his children's clothes had gone for the few dollars they brought, and now he was face to face with starvation. He walked the streets day after day in company with a sad procession of haggard men hunting for work, but they might as well have hunted on the arctic floes or in the vacant desert. For every stroke of work there were a hundred men. The answer was everywhere the same: "We are laying men off; we are shutting down."

He returned home one night hungry and dejected to find his wife fainting with hunger and his children famished. "I will get you bread," he said to the children, and he turned and went out. I always was glad that he came to me that night, though I did not know till afterward what a strait he was in. I did not have much to lend him, but I lent him some. His face was haggard with want; but it had a resolution in it that impressed me.

"I will pay it back, sir, out of my first wages. I am going to work to-morrow."

"I am glad of that," I said, for I thought he had gotten a place.

The next morning at light McNeil walked through the pickets who shivered outside the car-barn, and entered the sheds just as their shouts of derision and anger reached him. "I have come to work," he said simply. "My children are hungry."

The first car came out that morning, and on the platform stood McNeil, glum and white and grim, with a stout officer behind him. It ran down by the pickets, meeting with jeers and cries of "Scab! scab!" and a fusillade of stones; but as the hour was early the crowd was a small one, and the car escaped. It was some two hours later when the car reappeared on its return. The news that a scab was running the car had spread rapidly, and the street near the terminus had filled with a crowd wild with rage and furiously bent on mischief. As the car turned into a street it ran into a throng that had been increasing for an hour and now blocked the way. An obstruction placed on the track brought the car to a stop as a roar burst from the crowd and a rush was made for the scab. The officer on the car used his stick with vigor enough, but the time had passed when one officer with only a club could hold back a mob. He was jerked off the platform, thrown down, and trampled underfoot. The car was boarded, and McNeil, fighting like a fury, was dragged out and mauled to death before any other officers arrived. When the police, in force, in answer to a riot-call, reached the spot a quarter of an hour later and dispersed the mob, it looked as if the sea had swept over the scene. The car was overturned and stripped to a mere broken shell; and on the ground a hundred paces away, with only a shred of bloody clothing still about it, lay the battered and mutilated trunk of what had been a man trying to make bread for his children, while a wild cry of hate and joy at the deed raged about the street.

The men who were arrested easily proved that they were simply onlookers and had never been within fifty feet of the car.

The riot made a fine story for the newspapers, and the headlines were glaring. The victim's name was spelled according to the fancy of the reporter for each paper, and was correctly published only two days later.

The press, except the *Trumpet*, while divided in its opinion on many points, combined in its denouncement of the murder of the driver, and called on the city authorities to awake to the gravity of the situation and put down violence. It was indeed high time.

Moved by the similarity of the name to my friend McNeil, I walked over that afternoon to that part of the city where he had lived. It was one of the poorest streets of the poor section. The street on which I had lived at the old Drummer's, with its little hearth-rug yards, was as much better than it as the most fashionable avenue was better than that. The morass, like a moving bog, had spread over it and was rapidly engulfing it.

The sidewalks were filled with loafers, men and women who wore the gloomiest or surliest looks. As I passed slowly along, trying to read the almost obliterated numbers, I caught fragments of their conversation. A group of them, men and women, were talking about the man who had been killed and his family. The universal assertion was that it served him right, and his family, too. I gleaned from their talk that the family

had been boycotted even after he was dead, and that he had had to be buried by the city, and, what was more, that the cruel ostracism still went on against his family.

"Ay-aye, let 'em starve, we'll teach 'em to take the bread out of our mouths," said one woman, while another told gleefully of her little boy throwing stones at the girl as she came home from outside somewhere. She had given him a cake for doing it. The others applauded both of these. The milk of human kindness appeared to be frozen in their breasts.

"Much good it will do you! Do you get any more money for doing it?" said an old man with round shoulders and a thin face; but even he did not seem to protest on account of the cruelty. It was rather a snarl. Two or three young men growled at him; but he did not appear afraid of them; he only snarled back.

I asked one of the men which house was the one I was seeking. He told me, while half a dozen hooted something about the "scab."

When I came to the door pointed out I had no difficulty in recognizing it. The panels and sides were "daubed" up with mud, which still stuck in many places, showing the persecution which had been carried on. Inside, I never saw a more deplorable sight. The poor woman who came to the door, her face drawn with pain and white with terror, and her eyes red with weeping, would not apparently have been more astonished to have found a ghost on the steps. She gave a hasty,

frightened glance up the street in both directions, and moaned her distress.

"Won't you step inside?" she asked, more to get the door closed between her and the terror of the street than out of any other feeling; and when I was inside, she asked me over again what I wanted. She could not take in that I had called out of charity; she appeared to think that it was some sort of official visit. When she found out, however, that such was my object, the effect was instantaneous. At first she could not speak at all; but after a little she was calm enough and poured out all her woes. She went over anew how her husband had come over from Scotland several years before and they had been quite comfortably fixed. How he had gotten work, and had belonged to the union, and they had done well. He had, however, been obliged by the union to strike, and they had spent all the money they had, and in addition to that had gotten into debt. So, when the strike was over, although he obtained work again, he was in debt, and the harassment of it made him ill. Then how he had come North to find work, and had had a similar experience. All this I knew. It was just then that her last baby was born and that her little child died, and the daughter of the employer of her husband was so kind to her, that when her husband got well again, there was talk of a strike to help others who were out, and she made him resign from the union. Here she broke down. Presently, however, she recovered her composure. They had come to her then, she said, and told her they would ruin him.

"But I did not think they would kill him, sir," she sobbed. "He tried to get back, but Wringman kept him out. That man murdered him, sir."

There was not a lump of coal in the house; but her little girl had gone for some cinders, while she minded the baby. She had to go where she was not known—a long way, she said—as the children would not let her pick any where she used to get them.

When I came out I found that it had turned many degrees colder during the short time I was in the house, and the blast cut like a knife. The loafers on the street had thinned out under the piercing wind; but those who yet remained jeered as I passed on. I had not gotten very far when I came on a child, a little girl, creeping along. She was bending almost double under the weight of a bag of cinders, and before I reached her my sympathy was excited by the sight of her poor little bare hands and wrists, which were almost blue with cold. Her head, gray with the sifted ashes, was tucked down to keep her face from the cutting wind, and when I came nearer I heard her crying—not loud; but rather wailing to herself.

"What is the matter, little girl?" I asked.

"My hands are so cold—Oh! Oh! Oh!" she sobbed.

"Here, let me warm them." I took the bag and set it down, and took her little ashy hands in mine to try and warm them, and then for the first time I discovered that it was my little girl, Janet. She was so changed that I scarcely knew her. Her little pinched face, like her hair, was covered with ashes. Her hands were ice.

When I had gotten some warmth into them I took off my gloves and put them on her, and I picked up her bag and carried it back for her. My hands nearly froze, but somehow I did not mind it. I had such a warm feeling about my heart. I wonder men don't often take off their gloves for little poor children.

I marched with her through the street near her house, expecting to be hooted at, and I should not have minded it; for I was keyed up and could have fought an army. But no one hooted. If they looked rather curiously at me, they said nothing.

As I opened the door to leave, on the steps stood my young lady. It is not often that a man opens a door and finds an angel on the step outside; but I did it that evening. I should not have been more surprised if I had found a real one. But if one believes that angels never visit men, these days, he should have seen Eleanor Leigh as she stood there. She did not appear at all surprised. Her eyes looked right into mine, and I took courage enough to look into hers for an instant. I have never forgotten them. They were like deep pools, clear and bottomless, filled with light. She did not look at all displeased and I did not envy St. Martin.

All she said was, "How do you do, Mr. Glave?" It was quite as if she expected to find me there—and she had. She had seen me stop little Janet and put the gloves on her. She was on her way to the house, and she had stopped and waited, and then had followed us. I did not know this until long afterward;

but I asked her to let me wait and see her home, and so I did.

That walk was a memorable one to me. The period of explanations was past. I dared harbor the hope that I was almost in sight of port. When I put her on the car, she was so good as to say her father would be glad to see me some time at their home, and I thought she spoke with just the least little shyness, which made me hope that she herself would not be sorry.

When I left her, I went to see my old Drummer, and told him of the outrages which had been perpetrated on the poor woman. It was worth while seeing him. He was magnificent. As long as I was talking only of the man, he was merely acquiescent, uttering his "Ya, Ya," irresponsively over his beer; but when I told him of the woman and children, he was on his feet in an instant—"Tamming te strikers and all teir vorks." He seized his hat and big stick, and pouring out gutturals so fast that I could not pretend to follow him, ordered me to show him the place. As he strode through the streets, I could scarcely keep up with him. His stick rang on the frozen pavement like a challenge to battle. And when he reached the house he was immense. He was suddenly transformed. No mother could have been tenderer, no father more protecting. He gathered up the children in his great arms, and petted and soothed them; his tone, a little while before so ferocious, now as soft and gentle as the low velvet bass of his great drum. I always think of the Good Shepherd now as something like him that evening; rugged as a rock, gentle as a

zephyr. He would have taken them all to his house and have adopted them if the woman would have let him. His heart was bigger than his house. He seemed to have filled all the place; to have made it a fortress.

The strike had cast its black cloud over all the section, and not all of its victims were murdered by the mob.

I fell in with the man who had spoken to me so cheerily one morning of the sun's shining for him. He looked haggard and ill and despairing. He was out of work and could find none. In our talk he did not justify the strike; but he bowed to it with resignation as a stricken Orestes might have bowed to the blows of Fate. His spirit was not then broken—it was only embittered. His furniture which was so nearly paid for had gone to the loan sharks; his house of which he boasted had reverted to the Building Company. He looked fully twenty years older than when I had seen him last. I offered him a small sum which he took gratefully. It was the first money he had had in weeks, he said, and the stores had stopped his credits. A few weeks later I saw him staggering along the street, his heart-eating sorrow drowned for an hour in the only nepenthe such poverty knows.

XXXVII

WOLFFERT'S NEIGHBORS

I had not been to visit Wolffert and, indeed, had but a hazy idea of where he lived, knowing only that he had a room in the house of some Jew in the Jewish quarter. Hitherto our meetings had taken place either in John Marvel's narrow little quarters or in mine at the old Drummer's. But having learned from John that he was ill, I got the address from him, and one afternoon went over to see him. I found the place in a region more squalid than that in which John Marvel and I had our habitation and as foreign as if it had been in Judea or in a Black Sea province. In fact, it must have exhibited a mixture of both regions. The shops were small and some of them gay, but the gayest was as mean as the most sombre. The signs and notices were all in Yiddish or Russian, the former predominating, and as I passed through the ill-paved, ill-smelling, reeking streets I could scarcely retain my conviction that I was still in an American city. It was about the hour that the manufactories of clothing, etc., closed and the street through which I walked was filled with a moving mass of dark humanity that rolled through it like a dark and turgid flood. For blocks they filled the sidewalk, moving slowly on, and as I mingled in the mass, and

caught low, guttural, unknown sounds, and not a word of English all the while, I became suddenly aware of a strange alien feeling of uncertainty and almost of oppression. Far as eye could see I could not descry one Saxon countenance or even one Teuton. They were all dark, sallow, dingy, and sombre. Now and then a woman's hat appeared in the level moving surge of round black hats, giving the impression of a bubble floating on a deep, slow current to melt into the flood. Could this, I reflected sombrely, be the element we are importing? and what effect would the strange confluence have on the current of our life in the future? No wonder we were in the throes of a strike vast enough to cause anxiety!

I was still under the dominion of this reflection when I reached the street in which Wolffert had his home, and, after some difficulty, discovered the house in which he had his abode.

The street was filled with wretched little shops, some more wretched than others, all stuck together in a curious jumble of tawdry finery and rusty necessities. Among them were many shops where second-hand clothing was exhibited, or, from appearances, clothing for which that term was a flattering euphuism. I stopped at one where second-hand shoes were hung out, and, opening the door to ask the way, faced a stout, shapeless woman with a leathery skin and a hooked nose, above which a pair of inquisitive black eyes rested on me, roving alternately from my feet to my face, with an expression of mingled curiosity, alarm, and hostility.

I asked her if she could tell me where the number I wanted was, and as my inquiry caused not the least change of expression, I took out my card and wrote the number down. She gazed at it in puzzled silence, and then with a little lighting of her dark face, muttered a few unintelligible words and bustled back to where a curtain hung across the narrow shop, and lifting one corner of it gave a call which I made out to be something like "Jacob." The next moment a small, keen-looking boy made his way from behind the curtain and gazed at me. A few words passed between the two, in a tongue unknown to me, and then the boy, laying down a book that he carried in his hand, came forward and asked me in perfectly good English, "What is it you want?"

"I want to know where number 5260½ —— Street is. I have that address, but cannot find the number."

"I'll show you." His eyes too were on my shoes. "The numbers of the streets were all taken down last year, and have not been put back yet. That is where Mr. Wolffert lives. Do you know him?"

"Yes, I am going to see him."

He turned and said something rapidly to his mother, in which the only word I recognized was Wolffert's name. The effect was instantaneous. The expression of vague anxiety died out of the woman's face and she came forward jabbering some sort of jargon and showing a set of yellow, scattering teeth.

"I'll show you where he lives. You come with me," said Jacob. "She thought you were an agent." He

suddenly showed a much better set of teeth than his mother could display—"She don't speak English, you see." He had laid down his book on the counter and he now put on his cap. As he passed out of the door he paused and fastened his eyes on my feet. "You don't want a pair of shoes? We have all sorts—some as good as new. You can't tell. Half the price, too."

I declined the proffered bargain, and we walked up the street, Jacob discoursing volubly of many things, to show his superior intelligence.

"What was your book?" I inquired.

"U. S. History. I'm in the sixth grade."

"So? I should think you are rather small to be so high?" My ideas of grades were rather hazy, having been derived from "Tom Brown at Rugby" and such like encyclopædias.

"Pah! I stand next to head," he cried contemptuously.

"You do! Who stands head?"

"Iky Walthiemer—he's fourteen and I ain't but twelve. Then there is a fellow named Johnson—Jimmy Johnson. But he ain't nothin'!"

"He isn't? What's the matter with him?"

"He ain't got no eye on him—he don't never see nothin'."

"You mean he's dull?"

"Sure! Just mem'ry, that's all. He's dull. We beat 'em all."

"Who are 'we'?"

"We Jews."

"So——"

"Well, here we are. I'll run up and show you the door"—as we stopped at a little butcher shop beside which was a door that evidently led up a stair to the upper story.

"All right. You know Mr. Wolffert?"

"Sure! We all know him. He's a Jew, too."

"Sure!" I tried to imitate his tone, for it was not an accent only.

He ran up the stair and on up a second flight and back along a dark, narrow little passage, where he tapped on a door, and, without waiting, walked in.

"Here's a man to see you."

"A gentleman, you mean," I said dryly, and followed him, for I have a particular aversion to being referred to to my face as a mere man. It is not a question of natural history, but of manners.

"Well, Jacob," said Wolffert when he had greeted me, "have you got to the top yet?"

"Will be next week," said Jacob confidently.

I found Wolffert sitting up in a chair, but looking wretchedly ill. He, however, declared himself much better. I learned afterward—though not from him—that he had caught some disease while investigating some wretched kennels known as "lodging houses," where colonies of Jews were packed like herrings in a barrel; and for which a larger percentage on the value was charged as rental than for the best dwellings in the city. His own little room was small and mean enough,

but it was comfortably if plainly furnished, and there were books about, which always give a homelike air, and on a little table a large bunch of violets which instantly caught my eye. By some inexplicable sixth sense I divined that they had come from Eleanor Leigh; but I tried to be decent enough not to be jealous; and Wolffert's manifest pleasure at seeing me made me feel humble.

We had fallen to talking of his work when I said, "Wolffert, why do you live in this horrible quarter? No wonder you get ill. Why don't you get a room in a more decent part of the town—near where John Marvel lives, for instance?"

Wolffert smiled.

"Why?—what is the matter with this?"

"Oh! Why, it is dreadful. Why, it's the dirtiest, meanest, lowest quarter of the city! I never saw such a place. It's full of stinking"—I was going to say "Jews"; but reflected in time to substitute "holes."

Wolffert, I saw, supplied the omitted objection.

"Do you imagine I would live among the rich?" he demanded; "I thought you knew me better. I don't want to be fattened in the dark like a Strasbourg goose for my liver to make food acceptable to their jaded appetites. Better be a pig at once."

"No, but there are other places than this—and I should think your soul would revolt at this—" I swung my arm in a half circle.

"Are they not my brethren?" he said, half smiling.

"Well, admit that they are—" (And I knew all

along that this was the reason.) "There are other grades—brethren of nearer degree."

"None," he ejaculated. "'I dwell among my own people'—I must live among them to understand them."

"I should think them rather easy to understand."

"I mean to be in sympathy with them," he said gently. "Besides, I am trying to teach them two or three things."

"What?" For I confess that my soul had revolted at his surroundings. That surging, foreign-born, foreign-looking, foreign-spoken multitude who had filled the street as I came along through the vile reek of "Little Russia," as it was called, had smothered my charitable feelings.

"Well, for one thing, to learn the use of freedom—for another, to learn the proper method and function of organization."

"They certainly appear to me to have the latter already—simply by being what they are," I said lightly.

"I mean of business organization," Wolffert explained. "I want to break up the sweat shop and the sweat system. We are already making some headway, and have thousands in various kinds of organized business which are quite successful."

"I should not think they would need your assistance—from what I saw. They appear to me to have an instinct."

"They have," said Wolffert, "but we are teaching them how to apply it. The difficulty is their ignorance and prejudice. You think that they hold you in some

distrust and dislike, possibly?" As his tone implied a question, I nodded.

"Well, that is nothing to the way in which they regard me. You they distrust as a gentile, but me they detest as a renegade."

"Well, I must say that I think you deserve what you get for bringing in such a mass of ignorance. Now, you are an American, and a patriotic one. How do you reconcile it with your patriotism to introduce into the body politic such an element of ignorance, superstition, and unrest?"

"Why," said Wolffert, "you don't know our people. The Jew is often an element of ignorance and superstition, though he is not alone in this, but he is never an element of unrest—when he is justly treated," he added after a pause. "But, whatever these people are in this generation, the next generation—the children of this generation—will be useful American citizens. All they require is a chance. Why, the children of these Russian Jews, baited from their own country, are winning all the prizes in the schools," he added, his pale face flushing faintly. "That lad who showed you in is the son of parents who sell second-hand shoes in the next street and cannot speak a word of English, and yet he stands at the head of his class."

"No, second!" I said.

"How do you know?"

"He told me."

"The little rascal! See how proud he is of it," said Wolffert triumphantly.

"He tried to sell me a pair of shoes."

Wolffert chuckled. "Did he?" Then he sobered, catching my thought. "That is the most important thing for him at present, but wait. Let this develop." He tapped his forehead. "He may give you laws equal to Kepler's or a new philosophy like Bacon's. He may solve aerial navigation—or revolutionize thought in any direction—who knows!"

His face had lighted up as he proceeded, and he was leaning forward in his chair, his eyes glowing.

"I know," I said, teasingly. "He'll sell shoes—second-hand ones polished up for new."

I was laughing, but Wolffert did not appreciate my joke. He flushed slightly.

"That's your gentile ignorance, my friend. That's the reason your people are so dense—they never learn—they keep repeating the same thing. No wonder we discover new worlds for you to claim!"

"What new worlds have you discovered?"

"Well, first, Literature, next commerce. What is your oldest boasted scripture?"

"I thought you were talking of material worlds!"

"We helped about that, too—did our full part. You think Queen Isabella pawned her jewels to send Christobal Colon to discover America—don't you?"

I nodded.

"Well, the man who put up the money for that little expedition was a Jew—'Arcangel, the Treasurer.' You never heard of him!"

"Never."

"He did it all the same. If you would read something else beside your narrow English writings, Glave, you would learn something of the true history of civilization." Now and then Wolffert's arrogance, like Antipater's, showed through the rents in his raiment.

"What for instance? since you appear to know it all."

"Well, almost any other history or philosophy. Read the work of the thinkers old and new—and see how much deeper life is than the shallow thing called by that divine name by the butterflies and insects and reptiles who flaunt their gauzy vans in our faces or fasten their brazen claws in our vitals. Meantime, you might read my book," he said with a smile, "when it comes out."

"Well, tell me about it meantime and save me the trouble. I sometimes prefer my friends to their books."

"You were always lazy," he said smiling. But he began to talk, laying down his philosophy of life, which was simple enough, though I could not follow him very far. I had been trained in too strict a school to accept doctrines so radical. And but that I saw him and John Marvel and Eleanor Leigh acting on them I should have esteemed them absolutely utopian. As it was, I wondered how far Eleanor Leigh had inspired his book.

XXXVIII

WOLFFERT'S PHILOSOPHY

(WHICH MAY BE SKIPPED BY THE READER)

As Wolffert warmed up to his theme, his face brightened and his deep eyes glowed.

"The trouble with our people—our country—the world—is that our whole system—social—commercial—political—every activity is based on greed, mere, sheer greed. State and Church act on it—live by it. The success of the Jew which has brought on him so much suffering through the ages has revenged itself by stamping on your life the very evil with which you charge him—love of money. What ideals have we? None but money. We call it wealth. We have debased the name, and its debasement shows the debasement of the race. Once it meant weal, now mere riches, though employed basely, the very enemy and assassin of weal. The covetousness, whose reprobation in the last of the commandments was intended as a compendium to embrace the whole, has honeycombed our whole life, public and private. The amassing of riches, not for use only, for display—vulgar beyond belief—the squandering of riches, not for good, but for evil, to gratify jaded appetites which never at their freshest craved anything but evil or folly, marks the lowest level of the

shopkeeping intellect. The Argands and the Canters are the aristocrats of the community, and the Capons are the fit priests for such people."

He turned away in disgust—but I prodded him.

"What is your remedy? You criticise fiercely! but give no light. You are simply destructive."

"The remedy is more difficult to give," he said gravely; "because the evil has been going on so long that it has become deep-rooted. It has sunk its roots into, not only the core of our life, but our character. It will take long to eradicate it. But one economic evil might be, and eventually must be changed, unless we wish to go down into the abyss of universal corruption and destruction."

"You mean——?"

"Capitalism—the idea that because a man is accidentally able to acquire through adventitious and often corrupt means vast riches which really are not made by himself, but by means of others under conditions and laws which he did not create, he may call them his own; use them in ways manifestly detrimental to the public good and, indeed, often in notorious destructiveness of it, and be protected in doing so by those laws."

"'Accidentally'—and 'adventitious means'! That does not happen so often. It may happen by finding a gold mine—once in ten thousand times—or by cornering some commodity on the stock or Produce Exchange once in one hundred thousand times, but even then a man must have intellect—force—courage—resourcefulness—wonderful powers of organization."

"So has the burglar and highwayman," he interrupted.

"But they are criminals—they break the law."

"What law? | Why law more than these others? Is not the fundamental law, not to do evil to others?"

"The law established by society for its protection."

"Who made those laws?"

"The people—through their representatives," I added hastily, as I saw him preparing to combat it.

"The people, indeed! precious little part they have had in the making of the laws. Those laws were made, not by the people—who had no voice in their making, but by a small class—originally the Chief—the Emperor—the King—the Barons—the rich Burghers—the people had no part nor voice."

"They received the benefit of them."

"Only the crumbs which fell from their masters' tables. They got the gibbet, the dungeon, the rack, and the stick."

"Wolffert, you would destroy all property rights."

"My dear fellow, what nonsense you talk. I am only for changing the law to secure property rights for all, instead of for a class, the necessity for which no longer exists, if it ever did exist."

"Your own law-giver recognized it and inculcated it." I thought this a good thrust. He waved it aside.

"That was for a primitive people in a primitive age, as your laws were for your people in their primitive age. But do you suppose that Moses would make no modification now?"

"I have no idea that he would. For I believe they were divine."

"Surely—Moses acted under the guidance of the great Jehovah, whose law is justice and equity and righteousness. The laws he gave were to inculcate this, and they served their purpose when Israel served God. But now when He is mocked, the letter of the law is made an excuse and is given as the command to work injustice and inequity and unrighteousness. Surely they should be, at least, interpreted in the spirit in which they were given. You claim to be a Christian?"

"A very poor one."

"In name, at least, you claim that there has been a new dispensation?"

"Yes—an amplification—a development and evolution."

"Precisely. In place of an 'eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—the other cheek turned—to do to others as you would have them do to you!' "

"That is the ideal. I have not yet reached that degree of——" I paused for the word.

"I, too, acknowledge that evolution, that ideal. Why should we not act on it?"

"Because of human nature. We have not yet reached the stage when it can be practically applied."

"But human nature while it does not change basically may be regulated, developed, uplifted, and this teaching is based on this principle. It has not yet borne much apparent fruit, it is true; but it is sound, nevertheless. We both in our better moments, at

least, feel it to be sound, and there has been a little, however little uplift, and however hard to maintain.

"You believe in the development of man; but you look only to his material development. I look for his complete development, material and spiritual. As he has advanced through the countless ages since God breathed into him the breath of Life, and by leading him along the lines of physical development to a station in creation where the physical evolution gave place to the ever-growing psychical development; so I believe he is destined to continue this psychical or spiritual growth, increasing its power as the ages pass and mounting higher and higher in spiritual knowledge, until he shall attain a degree of perfection that we only think of now as a part of the divine. We see the poet and the saint living to-day in an atmosphere wholly distinct from the gross materialism of common humanity. We see laws being enacted and principles evolved which make for the improvement of the human race. We see the gradual uplifting and improvement of the race. War is being diminished; its horrors lessened; food is becoming more diffused; civilization—material civilization—is being extended; and the universal, fundamental rights are being a little more recognized, however dimly. This means growth—the gradual uplifting of mankind, the diffusion of knowledge, as well as of food—the growth of intellectuality. And as this comes, think you that man will not rise higher? A great reservoir is being tapped and from it will flow, in the future, rich streams to fertilize the whole world of humanity.

Aspirations will leap higher and higher, and the whole race in time will receive new light, new power, new environments, with an ever-widening horizon, and a vast infinitude of spiritual truth as the field for the soul's exercise."

"It is a dream," I said, impressed by his burning eyes, his glowing face, as he drifted on almost in a rhapsody.

"Yes—a dream; but it might come true if all—if you and all like you—I mean all educated and trained people, would unite to bring it about. Your leader preached it, you profess the principles now, but do not practise them. The State has been against it—the Church equally. It is full of sham."

"It was Jerusalem that stoned the prophets," I interrupted. He swept on with a gesture.

"Yes, yes—I know—I am not speaking now as a sectarian."

"But, at least, as a Jew," I said, laughing.

"Yes, perhaps. I hardly know. I know about Hannan the High Priest. He tried to stand in with Pilate. He thought he was doing his duty when he was only fighting for his caste. But what an Iliad of woes he brought on his people—through the ages. But now they know, they profess, and yet stone the prophets. Your church, founded to fight riches and selfishness and formalism, is the greatest exploiter of all that the world knows. Two generations sanctify the wealth gotten by the foulest means. The robber, the murderer, the destroyer of homes are all accepted, and

if one protests he is stoned to-day as if he were a blasphemer of the law. If the Master to whom your churches are erected should come to-day and preach the doctrines he preached in Judea nineteen hundred years ago, he would be cast out here precisely as he was cast out there." He spoke almost fiercely.

"Yet his teachings," he added, "are nearer those of the people I represent than of those who assail them. Why should we not act on it? Possibly, some others might see our good works, and in any event we shall have done our part. John Marvel does."

"I know he does, but he is a better Christian than I am, and so are you."

"I am not a Christian at all. I am only a Jew."

"Will you say that His teachings have had no part in forming your character and life?"

"Not my character. My father taught me before I was able to read. Possibly I have extended his teachings!"

"Have His teachings had no part in deciding you as to your work?"

"His teachings? John Marvel's exposition of them in his life bore a part and, thus, perhaps——"

"That is it."

"Why should I not participate in the benefit of the wisdom of a Jewish rabbi?" said Wolffert, scornfully. "Did Jesus utter his divine philosophy only for you who were then savages in Northern Europe or half-civilized people in Greece, Italy, and Spain? Your claim that he did so simply evinces the incurable insularity of your people."

"What is your remedy? Socialism?"

"Call it what you will. That is a name which some prefer and some detest. The fact is, that the profit system on which all Modern Capitalism rests is radically and fundamentally vicious and wrong. Men work and strive, not to produce for use, for service, but for profit. Profit becomes the aim of human endeavor —nothing higher or better—Competition."

" 'Competition,' " I quoted, " 'is the soul of trade.' "

"Competition," he said, "may be the soul of trade, but that trade is the trade in men's souls, as well as bodies—in the universal soul of the people. It sets man against man, and brother against brother—Cain against Abel—and is branded with the curse of Cain."

"What would you substitute for it?" I demanded.

"The remedy is always a problem. I should try co-operation—in this age."

"Co-operation! It has been proved an absolute failure. It makes the industrious and the thrifty the slave of the idle and spendthrift. Men would not work."

"An idle and time-worn fallacy. The ambitious do not work for gold, the high-minded do not—John Marvel does not—Miss Leigh does not. The poor do not work for wealth, only for bread, for a crust, with starvation ever grinning at them beside their door which cannot shut out its grisly face. Look at your poor client McNeil. Did he work to accumulate gold? He worked to feed his starving children."

"But, would they work—this great class?"

"Yes, they would have to work, all who are capable of it, but for higher rewards. We would make all who are capable, work. We would give the rewards to those who produce, to all who produce by intellect or labor. We would do away with those who live on the producers —the leeches who suck the life-blood. Work, intellectual or physical, should be the law of society."

"They would not work," I insisted.

"Why do you go on drivelling that like a morning paper. Why would they not work! Man is the most industrious animal on earth. Look at these vast piles of useless buildings, look at the great edifices and works of antiquity. Work is the law of his awakened intellect. There would still be ambition, emulation, a higher and nobler ambition for something better than the base reward they strive and rob and trample each other in the mire for now. Men would then work for art, the old mechanic-arts would revive in greater beauty and perfection than ever before. New and loftier ideals would be set up. There would be more, vastly more men who would have those ideals. What does the worker now know of ideals? He is reduced to a machine, and a very poor machine at that. He does not know where his work goes, or have an interest in it. Give him that. Give his fellows that. It will uplift him, uplift his class, create a great reservoir from which to draw a better class. The trouble with you, my dear friend," said Wolffert, "is that you are assuming all the time that your law is a fixed law, your condition of society a fixed condition. They are not: There are few

things fixed in the world. The universal law is change —growth or decay. Of all the constellations and stars, the Pole star alone is fixed, and that simply appears so. It really moves like the rest, only in a vaster orbit with other stars moving about it."

I smiled, partly at his grandiose imagery and partly at his earnestness.

"You smile, but it is true. There are few fundamental laws. The survival of the fittest is one of them in its larger sense. It is that under which my people have survived."

"And that all men are by nature entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"Not at all, or, at least, only in the larger sense. If they were entitled to life, neither nature nor the law would deprive them of it—if to liberty, neither could interfere with it—if to the pursuit of happiness, we should have to reconstruct their minds."

"Then, in Heaven's name, what are they entitled to?" I exclaimed.

"First, under certain conditions, to the best fruits of properly organized society; to light—enlightenment—then to opportunity to have an equal chance for what they are willing to work for."

"Among other things, to work?" I hazarded, feeling that he had delivered himself into my hands. "Every man has a right to labor at whatever work and for whatever prices he pleases," I said; "that you will admit is fundamental?"

"Provided you allow me to define what you mean—

provided it does not injure his neighbor. You, as a lawyer, quote your *Sic utere tuo ut non.*"

"If the laborer and his employer contract, no one else has a right to interfere."

"Not the public—if they are injured by it?"

"Except by law."

"Who make the laws? The people in theory now, and some day they will do it in fact. As the spirit of the time changes, the interpretation of the law will change, and the spirit is changing all the time."

"Not in this particular."

"Yes, in all respects. Men are becoming more enlightened. The veil has been torn away and the light has been let in. As soon as education came the step was taken. We are in a new era already, and the truth is, you and your like do not see it."

"What sort of era? How is it new?"

"An era of enlightenment. Men have been informed; they know their power; 'the tree of knowledge has been plucked.'"

"They don't appear to do much with the knowledge."

"You think not? It is true that they have not yet learned to apply the knowledge fully, but they are learning. See how Democracy has ripened over the earth, overthrowing tyranny and opening the door of opportunity for all mankind—how the principles of Socialism have spread within the last generation, in Germany, in England, now in America and Russia. Why, it is now an active, practical force."

"Oh! not much," I insisted.

"A great deal, taking into account the opposition to it. It is contrary, remember, to the established usage and belief of thousands of years. It proposes to supplant what you have been trained to consider the foundation of your life, of society, of order, and you have been trained to believe that your most precious rights are bound up with that system. Every force of modern life is arrayed against it, yet it advances steadily; because, under your system, lies the fundamental error and sin which enables one man to hold another down and live off of him. You do not see that a new era is dawning, that man is developing, society passing into a new phase. Democracy has come to stay; because it is informed. More and more men are thinking, more and more men are learning to think."

"But they will not be able to upset the established order."

"There is no established order. It is always upset in time, either for good or ill. It never abides, for change is the law."

"Generally for ill. Content is lost."

"Generally for good," flashed Wolffert. "The content you speak of is slavery—stagnation and death. When a man ceases to move, to change consciously, he changes most, he dies. That is the law that for the universal good underlies all growth. You cannot alter it."

He ceased speaking and I took my leave, feeling that somehow he had grown away from me.

XXXIX

THE CONFLICT

Wolffert's book was never finished. When he got well, it was laid aside for more imperative work. The misery in the city had increased till it threatened the overthrow of everything. It was necessary to do his part to ameliorate the wretchedness; for his word was a charm in the foreign district where disturbance was most to be feared. He was the most talked of man in the city. He worked night and day.

For a little time it looked as though the efforts of the peace-makers, among whom were conspicuous in the poor section of the town John Marvel and Wolffert, to bring about a better feeling and condition were going to be successful. The men began to return to work. The cars were once more being operated, though under heavy police protection, Collis McSheen having had it made clear to him by his former friends like Canter and others that he must act or take the consequences.

One evening not long afterward, under prompting of an impulse to go and see how my poor woman and little Janet were coming on, and possibly not without some thought of Eleanor Leigh, who had hallowed her door-step the last time I was there, I walked over to that part of the town. I took Dix along, or he took himself, for

he was my inseparable companion these days. Eleanor Leigh had been there, but she had gone to the old Drummer's to see Elsa, who was ill, and had taken Janet with her. The mother said the child was afraid to go out on the street now, and Miss Eleanor thought it would do her good. The poor woman's pitiful face haunted me as I turned down the street. Though the men were returning to work, the effect of the strike was still apparent all through this section of the town. The streets were full of idlers, especially about the bar-rooms; and their surly looks and glum air testified to the general feeling.

Of all the gatherings of men that I have ever seen the most painful is that of men on a strike. They are a forlorn hope. In most assemblies there is enthusiasm, spirit, resolve: something that beams forth with hope and sustains. Most of these exist in striking men; yet Hope is absent. In other assemblages her radiant wings light up their faces; in strikes, it seems to me that the sombre shadow of care is always present. In this strike Wolffert had been one of the most interested observers. While he thought it unwise to strike, he advocated the men's right to strike and to picket, but not to employ violence. It was passive resistance that he preached, and he deplored the death of McNeil as much as I did, or John Marvel. Only he charged it to McSheen and Wringman and even more to the hypocrisy of a society which tolerated their operations.

This strike had succeeded to the extent of causing great loss to and, rumor said, of financially embarrass-

ing Mr. Leigh; but had failed so far as the men were concerned, and it was known that it had failed. Its only fruit for the working people was misery. The only persons who had profited by it were men like McSheen and Wringman.

I held strong opinions about the rights of men in the abstract; under the influence of John Marvel's and Wolffert's unselfish lives, and the yet more potent influence of Eleanor Leigh, I had come to realize the beauty of self-sacrifice, even if I had not yet risen to the loftiness of its practice; but the difficulties which I saw in the application of our theories and my experience that night at the meeting, followed by the death of McNeil, had divided me from my old associates like Wolffert. I could not but see that out of the movements instituted, as Wolffert believed, for the general good of the working classes, the real workingmen were become mere tools, and those who were glib of tongue, forward in speech, and selfish and shrewd in method, like McSheen and Wringman, used them and profited by them remorselessly, while the rest of the community were ground between the upper and the nether millstones. Even Wolffert, with his pure motives, had proved but an instrument in their hands to further their designs. Their influence was still at work, and under orders from these battening politicians many poor men with families still stood idle, with aims often as unselfish and as lofty as ever actuated patriots or martyrs, enduring hardship and privation with the truest and most heroic courage; whilst their leaders, like Wringman, who had been idle

agitators during the time of prosperity, now rose on the crest of the commotion they had created, and blossomed into importance. The Nile courses through upper Egypt bearing its flood to enrich the lower lands; but the desert creeps and hangs its parched lips over the very brink.

I determined to go and inquire after Elsa myself. So, with Dix at my heel, I passed through the foreign streets, crowded with the same dark-hued elements I had observed before, only now lowering and threatening as a cloud about to break, and walked over toward the little street in which the Loewens lived, and presently I fell in with Wolffert, who, like myself, appeared to have business in that direction. Under the circumstances, I should have been glad to escape from him; but as he joined me I could not well do so, and we walked along together. He looked worn and appeared to be rather gloomy, which I set down to his disappointment at the turn affairs connected with the strike had taken, for I learned from him that, under the influence of Wringman, there was danger of a renewal of hostilities; that his efforts at mediation had failed, and he had at a meeting which he had attended, where he had advocated conciliatory measures, been hooted down. There was danger, he said, of the whole trouble breaking out again, and if so, the sympathy of the public would now be on the other side. Thinking more of the girl I was in pursuit of than of anything else, and having in mind the announcement of Mr. Leigh's losses and reported embarrassment, I expressed myself hotly. If they struck

again they deserved all they got—they deserved to fail for following such leaders as Wringman and refusing to listen to their friends.

"Oh, no, they are just ignorant, that is all—they don't know. Give them time—give them time."

"Well, I am tired of it all."

"Tired! Oh! don't get tired. That's not the way to work. Stand fast. Go and see John Marvel and get new inspiration from him. See how he works."

"Wolffert, I am in love," I said, suddenly. He smiled—as I remembered afterward, sadly.

"Yes, you are." There was that in his tone which rather miffed me. I thought he was in love, too; but not, like myself, desperately.

"You are not—and you don't know what it is. So, it is easy for you."

He turned on me almost savagely, with a flame in his eyes.

"Not—! I not! You don't dream what it is to be in love. You cannot. You are incapable—incapable!" He clutched at his heart. The whole truth swept over me like a flood.

"Wolffert! Why—? Why have you never—?" I could not go on. But he understood me.

"Because I am a Jew!" His eyes burned with deep fires.

"A Jew! Well, suppose you are. She is not one to allow that——"

He wheeled on me.

"Do you think—? Do you imagine I mean—? I would not allow myself—I could never—never allow myself— It is impossible—for me."

I gazed on him with amazement. He was transformed. The pride of race, the agony and subdued fury of centuries, flamed in him. I saw for the first time the spirit of the chosen people: Israel in bondage, yet arisen, with power to call down thunders from Heaven. I stood abashed—abashed at my selfish blindness through all my association with him. How often I had heedlessly driven the iron into his soul. With my arm over his shoulder I stammered something of my remorse, and he suddenly seized my hand and wrung it in speechless friendship.

As we turned into a street not far from the Loewens', we found ahead of us quite a gathering, and it was increasing momentarily. Blue-coated police, grim-looking or anxious, were standing about in squads, and surlier-looking men were assembling at the corners. It was a strike. I was surprised. I even doubted if it could be that. But my doubt was soon dispelled. At that moment a car came around a corner a few blocks away and turned into the street toward us. There was a movement in a group near me; a shout went up from one of them and in a second the street was pandemonium. That dark throng through which we had passed poured in like a torrent. A bomb exploded a half block away, throwing up dirt and stones.

With a cry, "God of Israel!" Wolffert sprang forward; but I lost him in the throng. I found myself

borne toward the car like a chip on a fierce flood. The next instant I was a part of the current, and was struggling like a demon. On the platform were a brawny driver and two policemen. The motorman I recognized as Otto. As I was borne near the car, I saw that in it, among others, were an old man, a woman, and a child, and as I reached the car I recognized—I know not how—all three. They were the old Drummer, Eleanor Leigh, and the little girl, Janet McNeil. I thought I caught the eye of the young lady, but it may have been fancy; for the air was full of missiles, the glass was crashing and tingling; the sound of the mob was deafening. At any rate I saw her plainly. She had gathered up the scared child in her arms, and with white face, but blazing eyes, was shielding her from the flying stones and glass.

I was one of the first men on the car, and made my way into it, throwing men right and left as I entered it. I shall never forget the look that came into her eyes as she saw me. She rose with a cry and, stretching out her hands, pushed the child into my arms with a single word: "Save her." It was like an elixir; it gave me ten times the strength I had before. The car was blocked, and we descended from it—I in front protecting her—and fought our way through the mob to the outskirts, the old Drummer, a squad of policemen, and myself; I with the child by the hand to keep her near the ground and less exposed, and the old Drummer shielding us both and roaring like a lion. It was a warm ten minutes; the air was black with stones and

missiles. The crowd seemed to have gone mad and were like ravening wolves. The presence of a woman and child had no effect on them but to increase their fury. They were mad with the insanity of mobbism. But at last we got through, though I was torn and bleeding. They were after the motorman and conductor. The latter had escaped into a shop and the door was shut; but the mob was not to be balked. Doors and windows were smashed in like paper. The mob poured in and rummaged everywhere for its victim, up-stairs and down, like terriers in a cellar after a rat. Fortunately for him, he had escaped out the back way. They looted the shop and then turned back to search for another victim. As we were near old Loewen's house we took the refugees there, and when they were in that place of safety, I returned to the scene of conflict. I had caught sight of several faces in the crowd that roused me beyond measure, and I went back to fight. If I had had a pistol that day, I should certainly have committed murder. I had seen Wringman covertly urging the mob on and Pushkin enjoying it. Just as I stepped from the car with the child, trying to shield her and Eleanor Leigh, and with the old Drummer bulky and raging at my side, trying to shield us all and sputtering oaths in two languages, my eye reached across the mob and I had caught sight of McSheen's and Pushkin's heads above the crowd on the far edge of the mob where it was safe. McSheen wore his impervious mask; the other's face was wicked with satisfaction, and he was laughing. A sudden desire to kill

sprang into my heart. If I had not had my charges to guard, I should have made my way to him then. I came back for him now.

When I arrived, the fight had somewhat changed. Shops were being looted, wagons, trucks, and every sort of vehicle were being turned into the street by drivers who sympathized with the strike, to impede the restoration of order. The police, aroused at last and in deadly earnest, had formed in order and, under their hammering, the mob was giving way. Only at one point they were making a stand. It was the corner where Pushkin had stood, and I made toward it. As I did so the crowd opened, and a group stamped itself indelibly in my mind. In the front line of the mob, Wolffert, tall and flaming, hatless, and with flying hair, swinging arms, and wide-open mouth, by turns trying to pacify the wild mob, by turns cursing and fighting a group of policemen—who, with flying clubs and drawn pistols, were hammering them and driving them slowly—was trying to make himself heard. Beyond these, away at the far edge of the mob the face of Pushkin, his silk hat pulled over his eyes. As I gazed at him, he became deadly pale, and then turned as if to get away; but the crowd held him fast. I was making toward him, when a figure taller than his shoved in between us, pushing his way toward him. He was fighting for his life. His head was bare and his face was bleeding. His back was to me; but I recognized the head and broad shoulders of Otto. It was this sight that drove the blood from Pushkin's face, and

well it might; for the throng was being parted by the young Swede as water is parted by a strong swimmer. There was a pistol shot, then I saw the Swede's arm lifted with the lever in his hand, and the next second Pushkin's head went down. The cry that went up and the surging of the crowd told me what had happened, but I had no time to act; for at this moment I saw a half-dozen men in the mob fall upon Wolffert, who with bleeding face was still trying to hold them back, and he disappeared in the rush. I shouted to some officers by me, "They are killing a man there," and together we made our way through the crowd toward the spot. It was as I supposed—the adventurer was down. The young Swede had settled his account with him. He was unconscious, but he was still breathing. Wolffert, too, was stretched on the ground, battered almost beyond recognition. John Marvel, his own face bruised and bleeding, was on his knees beside him, supporting his head, and the police were beating the crowd back. As I drew near, Wolffert half rose. "Don't beat them; they don't know." He sank back. The brawny young Swede, with a pistol bullet through his clothes, was already on the other side of the street, making his way out through the crowd. Pushkin's and Wolffert's fall and the tremendous rush made by the police caused the mob to give way finally, and they were driven from the spot, leaving a half-dozen hatless and drunken leaders in the hands of the police.

Pushkin was taken up and was carried to a hospital, and John Marvel lifted Wolffert in his arms. Just as

he was lifted, a stone struck me on the head, and I went down and knew no more.

When I came to, I was in a hospital. John Marvel was sitting beside me, his placid eyes looking down into mine with that mingled serenity and kindness which gave such strength to others. I think they helped me to live as they had helped so many other poor sufferers to die. I was conscious only for a moment, and then went off into an illness which lasted a long time, before I really knew anything. But I took him with me into that misty border-land where I wandered so many weeks, before returning to life, and when I emerged from it again, there he sat as before, serene, confident, and inspiring. He wore a mourning band on his sleeve.

"Where is Dix?" was the first thing I asked.

"He is all right—in good hands."

It was a long time before I could be talked to much; but when I was strong enough, he told me many things that had taken place. The strike was broken up. Its end was sad enough, as the end of all strikes is. Wolffert was dead—killed in the final rush of the riot in which I was hurt. And so perished all his high aims and inefficient, unselfish methods. His father had come on and taken his body home: "A remarkable old man," said John. "He was proud of Leo, but could not get over the loss of the great merchant he would have been." Pushkin had recovered, and had been discharged from the hospital, and had just married Collis McSheen's daughter. "She would have him," said John. Wringman had disappeared. On the collapse of the strike,

it had been found that he had sold out to Coll McSheen and the Argand companies, and furnished them information. He had now gone away, Marvel did not know where. Langton, when I saw him later, thought he had been afraid to stay longer where so many men were who had lost their places through him.

"It is always the way—the innocent suffer, and the guilty escape," I murmured.

I felt Marvel's hand gently placed over my lips.

"Inscrutable; but it must be right," he said:

> "'God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform.'"

"I don't believe God had anything to do with it." I was bitter; for I was still thinking of Wolffert and Pushkin and McSheen.

"The doctors tell me that a hundredth part of an inch more, and a friend of mine would never have known anything again," said Marvel, gravely, looking down at me with sorrowful, kind eyes.

Under this argument *ad hominem* I was silent, if not convinced. We are always ready to think Providence interferes in our especial behalf.

I started to ask after another who had been in the riot, but I could not frame the question. I saw that Marvel knew what I wished. I learned afterward that I had talked of her constantly during my delirium. She was well, he told me. She had not been hurt, nor had the child or old Loewen. She had left the city. Her father was involved now in a great lawsuit, the object

of which Marvel did not know, and she had gone away.

"Where has she gone?"

He did not answer, and I took it for granted that he did not know.

"If I had been you, I would have found out where she went to," I said peevishly.

He took no notice of this. He only smiled. He did not say so; but I thought from his manner that she had gone abroad. He had had a note from her saying that she would be away a long time, and inclosing him a generous contribution for his poor.

"She is an angel," he said.

"Of course she is."

Though he spoke reverently, I was almost angry with him for thinking it necessary to say it at all.

"Yes; but you do not know how good she is. None but God knows how good some women are."

One or two other pieces of news he told me. The old Drummer and his wife had gone off, too; but only on a visit to Elsa. Elsa and Otto had been married, and were living in another State. I saw that he still had something else to tell, and finally it came out. As soon as I was able, I must go away for a while. I needed change and rest, and he knew the very place for me, away off in the country.

"You appear to be anxious to depopulate the city," I said. He only smiled contentedly.

"I am going to send you to the country," he said with calm decision.

"I have to work——"

"When you come back. I have made all the arrangements."

"I am going to find Eleanor Leigh. I will find her if the world holds her."

"Yes, to be sure," he smiled indulgently. He was so strong that I yielded.

I learned that a good offer was waiting for me to go into the law office of one of the large firms when I should be well enough to work, in a capacity which Jeams would have termed that of a "minor connectee"; but it was coupled with the condition that I should get well first. My speech at the meeting when I denounced Wringman, and my part in the riots, had become known, and friends had interested themselves in my behalf. So John Marvel reported; and as he appeared to be managing things, I assumed that he had done this, too.

I never fully knew until after his death how truly Wolffert was one of the Prophets. I often think of him with his high aim to better the whole human race, inspired by a passion for his own people to extend his ministration to all mankind, cast out by those he labored for; denying that he was a Christian, and yet dying a Christian death in the act of supplicating for those who slew him. I owe him a great debt for teaching me many things, but chiefly for the knowledge that the future of the race rests on the whole people and its process depends on each one, however he may love his own, working to the death for all. He opened my eyes

to the fact that every man who contributes to the common good of mankind is one of the chosen people and that the fundamental law is to do good to mankind.

I discovered that John Marvel knew he was in love with Eleanor Leigh, though how he knew it I never learned. "He never told her," he said, "but died with it locked in his heart—as was best," he added after a pause, and then he looked out of the window, and as he did not say anything from which I could judge whether he knew why Wolffert never told his love, I did not tell what I knew. It may have been the slowly fading light which made his face so sad. I remember that a long silence fell between us, and it came over me with a new force how much more unselfishly both these men had loved than I and how much nobler both had always been—the living and the dead. And I began battling with myself to say something which I felt I ought to say, but had not courage enough.

Presently, John said very slowly, almost as if he were speaking to himself, "I believe if you keep on, she will marry you, and I believe you will help each other—I know she will help you." His arm was resting on the table.

I leant over and laid my hand on his arm.

"I once thought it certain I should win her. I am far from sure that I shall now. I am not worthy of her—but I shall try to be. You alone, John, of all the men I know, are. I cannot give her up—but it is only honest to tell you that I have less hope than I had."

He turned to me with a sad little smile on his face and shook his head.

"I would not give her up if I were you. You are not good enough for her, but no one is, and you will grow better."

For the first time, I almost thought him handsome.

"You are, old man."

"Me! Oh! no, I am not—I have my work to do—it is useless to talk to me—you keep on."

He picked up a paper and began to read, and I observed for the first time that he had taken off his glasses. I made some remark on it.

"Yes, my sight is getting better—I can see the stars now," he said smiling.

"Ah! John, you have long seen the stars," I said.

So, as soon as I could travel, John Marvel sent me off—sent me to a farmhouse where he had lived in his first parish—a place far from the railroads; a country of woods and rolling fields and running streams; the real country where blossoms whiten and birds sing and waters murmur.

"They are the best people in the world," he said; and they were. They accepted me on his word. "Mr. Marvel had sent me, and that was enough." His word was a talisman in all that region. They did not know who the Queen of England was, and were scarcely sure as to the President of the United States; but they knew John Marvel. And because I had come from him they treated me like a prince. And this was the man I had had the folly to look down on!

In that quiet place I seemed to have reached content. In that land of peace the strife of the city, the noise and turmoil and horror of the strike, seemed but as the rumble of waves breaking on some far-off shore. I began to quaff new life with the first breath of the balmy air.

The day after I arrived I borrowed the skiff that belonged to my host and paddled down the little river that skirted his place, with the idea of fishing in a pool he had told me of.

The afternoon was so soft and balmy that I forgot my sport and simply drifted with the current under the overhanging branches of willows and sycamores, when, turning a bend in the stream, I came on a boat floating in a placid pool. In it were a young lady and a little girl, and who but Dix, his brindled head held high, his twisted ears pointed straight up-stream, and his whole body writhing and quivering with excitement. It was a moment before I could quite take it in, and I felt for a second as if I were dreaming.

Yet there was Eleanor Leigh under the willows, her small white hand resting on the side of the boat, her face lovelier than ever, and her voice making music in my ears with those low, sincere tones that I had never forgotten, and which made it the most beautiful in the world. I must have carried my soul in my eyes that moment; for the color sprang to her cheeks and I saw a look in hers I had never seen there before.

"Well, this is Fate," I said, as the current bore my boat against hers and it lay locked against it in that limpid pool.

"Would Mr. Marvel have called it so?" she asked, her eyes resting upon me with a softer look in them than they had ever given me.

"No, he would have said Providence."

I am sure it was on that stream that Halcyone found retreat. In that sweet air, freed from any anxieties except to please her whose pleasure had become the sun of my life, I drank in health day by day and hour by hour. My farmhouse was only a half-mile or so across the fields to the home of Eleanor Leigh's old cousins with whom she was staying, and only the sidereal travellers followed that path so regularly as I. It was the same place where she had first met John Marvel—and Wolffert. She was even interested in my law, and actually listened with intelligence to the succulent details of Livery of Seisin, and other ancient conveyancing. Not that she yet consented to marry me. This was a theme she had a genius for evading. However, I knew I should win her. Only one thing troubled me. As often as I touched on my future plans and spoke of the happiness I should have in relieving her of the drudgery of a teacher's life, she used to smile and contest it. It was one of the happinesses of her life, she said, to teach that school. But for it, I would never have "put out her fire for her that morning." Was ever such ingratitude! Of course, I would not admit this. "Fate—no, Providence was on my side." And I took out my violets and showed them to her, telling her their history. They still retained a faint fragrance. And the smile she

I am sure it was on that stream that Halcyone found retreat.

gave was enough to make them fresh again. But I, too, was friendly to the school. How could I be otherwise? For she told me one day that the first time she liked me was when I was sitting by the cab-driver holding the little dirty child in my arms, with Dix between my feet. And I had been ashamed to be seen by her! I only feared that she might take it into her head still to keep the school. And I now knew that what she took into her little head to be her duty she would perform. "By the way, you might take lessons in making up the fire," she suggested.

I received quite a shock a few days later when I found in my mail a letter from the Miss Tippses, telling me of their delight on learning of my recovery, and mentioning incidentally the fact, which they felt sure I would be glad to know, that they had settled all of their affairs in a manner entirely satisfactory to them, as Mr. McSheen had very generously come forward at a time when it was supposed that I was fatally injured and had offered to make reparation to them and pay out of his own pocket, not only all of the expenses which they had incurred about the matter, but had actually paid them three thousand dollars over and above these expenses, a munificent sum which had enabled them to pay dear Mrs. Kale all they owed her. They felt sure that I would approve of the settlement, because Mr. McSheen's intermediary had been "a life-long friend of mine and in some sort," he said, "my former law partner, as we had lived for years in adjoining offices." They had signed all the papers he had presented and were glad to

know that he was entirely satisfied, and now they hoped that I would let them know what they owed me, in order that they might settle at least that part of their debt; but for the rest, they would always owe me a debt of undying gratitude, and they prayed God for my speedy recovery and unending happiness, and they felt sure Mr. Peck would rejoice also to know that I was doing so well.

Peck! And he had charged them a fee for his services!

It was now approaching the autumn and I was chafing to get back to work. I knew now that success was before me. It might be a long road; but I was on it.

John Marvel, in reply to an inquiry, wrote that the place was still waiting for me in the office he had mentioned, though he did not state what it was.

"How stupid he is!" I complained. Eleanor Leigh only laughed.

She "did not think him stupid at all, and certainly she did not think I should do so. In fact, she considered him one of the most sensible men she ever knew."

"Why, he could not have done more to keep me in ignorance, if he had tried," I fumed. And she only laughed the more.

"I believe you are jealous of him." Her eyes were dancing in an exasperating way they had. I was consumed with jealousy of everybody; but I would never admit it.

"Jealous of John Marvel! Nonsense! But I believe you were in—you liked him very much?"

"I did," she nodded cheerily. "I do—more than any one I ever knew—almost." And she launched out in a eulogy of John which quite set me on fire.

"Then why did you not marry him?" I was conscious that my head went up and my wrath was rising.

"He never asked me." Her dancing eyes still playing hide and seek with mine.

"I supposed there was some good reason," I said loftily. She vouchsafed no answer—only went on making a chain of daisies, while her dimples came and went, and I went on to make a further fool of myself. I was soon haled up and found myself in that outer darkness, where the cheerful occupation is gnashing of teeth. Like the foolish glass-merchant, I had smashed all my hopes. I walked home through the Vale of Bitterness.

That evening, after spending some hours in trying to devise a plan by which I could evade the humiliation of an absolute surrender, and get back without crawling too basely, I went over to say what I called—good-by. I was alone; for Dix had abandoned me for her, and I did not blame him even now. It was just dusk; but it seemed to me midnight. I had never known the fields so dark. As I turned into a path through the orchard where I had had so many happy hours, I discovered her sitting on the ground beneath a tree with Dix beside her; but as I approached she rose and leant against the tree, her dryad eyes resting on me placidly. I walked up slowly.

"Good evening—" solemnly.

"Good evening—" seriously.

I was choosing amongst a half-dozen choice sentences I had framed as an introduction to my parting speech, when she said quietly, looking up: "I thought you might not come back this evening."

"I have come to say good-by."

"Are you going away?" Her voice expressed surprise—nothing more.

"Yes." Solemnly.

"For how long?"—without looking up.

"Perhaps, forever." Tragically.

"You are better at making a fire than I had supposed. Will you give me Dix?" This with the flash of a dimple.

"I—I—yes—if you want him."

I glanced at her face just in time to see the dimples disappear. "I am thinking of being married next week." My heart stopped beating.

"You were—what?"

"But of course, if you are going away I could not do it, could I?" Her eyes sought mine, then fell.

"Eleanor!" I tried to possess myself of her hand; but she put it behind her. I tried to secure the other; but that also disappeared. Then I took—herself. "Eleanor!" Her face next second had grown grave. She looked up suddenly and looked me full in the eyes.

"You are a goose. What would you think if I were to say I would marry you right away?" She looked down again quickly, and her face was sweet with tenderness.

I was conscious of a sudden drawing in of my breath, and a feeling as if I were rising into the sky, "rimmed by the azure world." Then my brain began to act, and I seemed to have been lifted above the darkness. I was up in the sunlight again.

"I should think I was in Heaven," I said quietly, almost reverently. "But for God's sake, don't say that to me unless you mean it."

"Well, I will. I have written my father. Write to Mr. Marvel and ask him to come here."

I have never known yet whether this last was a piece of humor. I only know I telegraphed John Marvel, and though I rode all night to do so, I thought it was broad daylight.

In the ripe autumn John Marvel, standing before us in his white surplice in the little chapel among the oaks and elms which had been his first church, performed the ceremony that gave me the first prize I had really striven for—the greatest any man on earth could have won.

Still, as often as I spoke of my future plans, there was some secret between them: a shadowy suggestion of some mystery in which they both participated. And, but that I knew John Marvel too well, I might have been impatient. But I knew him now for the first time as she had known him long.

On our arrival in the city, after I had given the driver an order where to go, she gave another, and when the carriage drew up, it was not at my hotel, but at the door of the sunny house on the corner where I had first seen

Eleanor Leigh come tripping down the steps with her parcels for the poor little crippled child and her violets for the Miss Tippses. Springing out before me, with her face radiant with joy and mystery, she tripped up the steps now just as the door was flung open by a butler who wore a comical expression of mingled pleasure and solemnity, for the butler was Jeams, and then having introduced him to me, she suddenly took the key from the lock, and handing it to me with a bow and a low laugh of delight:

"I make you, sir, livery of seisin."

This, then, was the mystery.

She still lived in the house on the corner—throngh the aid offered by my namesake and kinsman her father had been enabled to retain it, and had given it to her as a wedding present.

So after long striving by ways that I knew not, and by paths that I had not tried, my fancy was realized.

I now dwell in the house on the corner that I picked so long ago for its sunshine.

It is even sunnier than I thought it. For I have found that sunlight and sweetness are not from without, but from within, and in that home is the radiance I caught that happy morning when I first saw Eleanor Leigh come tripping down the steps, like April, shedding sunshine and violets in her path.

XL

THE CURTAIN

In closing a novel, the old novelists used to tell their readers, who had followed them long enough to become their friends, what in the sequel became of all the principal characters; and this custom I feel inclined to follow, because it appears to me to show that the story is in some sort the reflection of life as it is and not as novelist or reader would make it. Fate may follow all men, but not in the form in which every reader would have it fall.

It might have satisfied one's ideas of justice if I could have told how Collis McSheen reaped in prison the reward of his long hidden crimes, and the adventurer, Pushkin, unmasked and degraded, was driven out from among the wealthy, whom he so sedulously cultivated; but this would not have been true to the facts. Collis McSheen moved into the great house which he had bought with his ill-gained wealth to gratify his daughter's ambition, and lived for many years, to outward seeming, a more or less respectable man; gave reasonably where he thought it would pay, from the money of which he had robbed others, and doubtless endeavored to forget his past, as he endeavored to make others forget it; but that past was linked to him by bands which

no effort could ever break. And though he secured the adulation of those whom he could buy with his gaudy entertainments, he could never secure the recognition of any worthy man.

In his desperate hope to become respectable he broke with many of his old friends and with all whom he could escape from, but he could not escape from one, however he strove to break with him: himself. Chained to him by a bond he could not break was the putrescent body of his reeking past. It is the curse of men like him that those he longs to make his friends are the element who will have none of him. Thus, like Sisyphus, he ever strives to roll the stone to the hill-top, and, like Tantalus, he ever strives to reach the water flowing below his lips. Though he had escaped the legal punishment of his crimes, his punishment was that he lived in constant dread of the detection which appeared ever to dog his footsteps. The last measure in the bitter cup which he had filled with his own hand came from his daughter, who now called herself Countess Pushkin. Finding that, notwithstanding her so-called title and large establishment, she was excluded from that set to which she had been tolerantly admitted while she had youth and gayety and the spirits of a schoolgirl, not to mention the blindness of that age to things which experience sees clearly enough, she conceived the idea that it was her father's presence in her home which closed to her the doors of those houses where she aspired to be intimate. The idea, though it had long had a lodgment in her mind, had been fos-

tered by Pushkin. Having to make her choice between her father and her social aspirations, she decided promptly. The scene which occurred was one which neither Collis McSheen nor his daughter could ever forget. In the sequel McSheen moved out and took quarters in a hotel, where he gradually sank into the hopelessness of a lonely misanthrope, shorn of his power, feared only by those he despised, detested by those he admired, and haunted by the fear of those he hated.

Pushkin remained in some sort in possession of the field, but though McSheen's daughter had been able to banish her father from his own home, she could not escape from her husband, whose vices, if apparently less criminal than McSheen's, were not less black. His capacity for spending money was something she had never dreamed of, and, like the horse-leech's daughter, he continually called for more, until after a furious scene, his wife awoke to her power, and already half-beggared, suddenly shut her purse as her heart had been long shut against him, and bade him go. From this time her power over him was greater than it had ever been before; but unless rumor belied them desperately, they lived a life of cat and dog with all that it implied, until finally Pushkin was driven out, and after hanging about for a few years, died, as I learned, while his wife was off in Europe.

Peck continued, to outward appearance, a prosperous lawyer. His inveterate economy enabled him to preserve the appearance of prosperity; but no lawyer of standing ever spoke of him without a shrug of the shoul-

der or a lift of the eyebrow. Rumor dealt somewhat freely with his domestic affairs, but I never knew the facts, and rumor is often as great a liar almost as—I had nearly said as Peck, but that would be impossible. My last personal experience of him was in the case of Mr. Leigh's suit to keep control of his railway. In the final suit involving the straightening out of all matters connected with the attempt of the Canters and their set to get control of this property, I was retained as junior counsel along with my kinsman, Mr. Glave, and other counsel, representing Mr. Leigh's and his associates' interest. Peck appeared in the case as one of the representatives of a small alleged interest held by his father-in-law, Mr. Poole, which, as turned out on the final decision of the cause, had no value whatever. This having been decided, Peck, who was not without energy, at least where money was concerned, brought forward a claim for compensation to be allowed him out of the fund, and when this also was decided against him, he sought and secured a conference with our counsel, at which I was present. The contention which he set forth was based upon an equitable claim, as he termed it, to compensation for expenses and professional services expended under color of title, and if the facts he stated had been so, he might have been entitled equitably to some allowance. I had satisfied myself that his claims were without a shadow of foundation, yet he had the nerve, when he concluded his argument, or rather his personal appeal to our counsel, to turn to me for corroboration of his statement.

"I admit, gentlemen," he said, "that these facts rest largely on my personal assurances, and, unfortunately, I am not known personally to most of you, though I trust that my professional standing where I am known may be accepted as a guarantee of my statements; but happily, there is one of you to whom I can refer with confidence, my old college mate and valued friend, Henry Glave. I might almost term him my former partner, so closely were we associated in the days when we were both struggling young attorneys, living in adjoining offices—I might, indeed, almost say the same office. He, I feel quite sure, will corroborate every statement I have made, at least so far as he knows the facts, and even where they rest wholly on my declaration, I feel sure of his indorsement, for he knows that I would cut off my right hand and have my tongue torn from its roots, before I would utter an untruth in any matter whatsoever; and least of all, where so paltry a thing as money is concerned. I appeal to Henry Glave."

He sat down with his eyes fixed blandly on me. I was so taken aback that I scarcely knew what to say. The smoothness of his words and the confidence of his manner had evidently made an impression on the others. They had, indeed, almost influenced me, but suddenly a whole train of reflection swept through my mind. Peck's duplicity from his earliest appearance in Wolffert's room at college down to the present, with my two old clients, the Miss Tippses, at the end, deceived and robbed by Collis McSheen, with Peck, as

the facile instrument, worming himself into their confidence for what he called so paltry a thing as money, all came clearly to my mind. I stood up slowly, for I was thinking hard; but my duty appeared clear.

I regretted, I said, that Mr. Peck had appealed to me and to my long acquaintance with him, for it made my position a painful one; but as he had cited me as a witness, I felt that my duty was plain, and this was to state the facts. In my judgment, Mr. Peck was not entitled to any compensation whatever, as the evidence, so far as it existed outside of Mr. Peck's statements, was contrary to his contention, and so far as it rested on his personal testimony, I considered it as nothing, for I would not believe one word he said where his personal interest was concerned.

"And now," I added, "if Mr. Peck wishes me to give the grounds on which this opinion of mine is based, either orally or in writing, I will do so."

I paused, with my gaze fastened on him, and, with a sudden settling in their seats, the other counsel also turned their eyes on him. His face had suddenly blanched, but beyond this his expression did not change. He sat for a few seconds rather limply, and then slowly rose.

"I am astonished," he began slowly, and his voice faltered. "I am surprised, gentlemen, that Mr. Glave should think such things of me." He took out his watch, fumblingly, and glanced at it. It was the same watch he had got of me. "I see I must ask you to excuse me. I must catch my train," he stammered.

"Good morning," and he put on his hat and slunk out of the door.

As the door closed every one drew a long breath and settled in his seat, and nearly every one said, "Well."

My kinsman, whose eyes had been resting on me with a somewhat unwonted twinkle in them, reached across the board and extended his large hand.

"Well, young man, you and I had a misunderstanding a few years ago, but I hope you bear me no grudge for it now. I should like to be friends with you. If you had needed it, you would have squared all accounts to-day. I know that man. He is the greatest liar on earth. He has lost the power to tell the truth."

It may well be believed that I had gripped his hand when he first held it out, and the grip was one of a friendship that has lasted.

I had expected to hear from Peck, but no word came from him, and the last I ever heard of him was that he and McSheen had had a quarrel, in which McSheen had kicked him out of his office. A suit appeared on the docket against McSheen, in which Peck was the plaintiff, but no declaration was ever filed, and the case was finally dropped from the docket.

Jeams failed to hold long the position of butler in our modest household, for though my wife put up—on my account, as I believe—with Jeams's occasionally marked unsteadiness of gait or mushiness of utterance, she finally broke with him on discovering that Dix showed unmistakable signs of a recent conflict, in which the fact that he had been worsted had possibly something

to do with Jeams's discharge, for Dix was the idol of her heart, and it came to her ears that Jeams had taken Dix out one night and matched him against the champion of the town. But though Jeams lost the post of butler, he simply reverted to his old position of factotum and general utility man about my premises His marriage to a very decent woman, though, according to rumor, with a termagant's tongue, helped to keep him reasonably straight, though not uniformly so; for one afternoon my wife and I came across him when he showed that degree of delightful pomposity which was the unmistakable sign of his being "half-shot."

"Jeams," I said, when I had cut short his grandiloquence, "what will Eliza say to you when she finds you this way again?"

Jeams straightened himself and assumed his most dignified air. "My wife, sir, knows better than to take me to task. She recognizes me, sir, as a gentleman."

"She does? You wait and see when you get home."

Jeams's manner suddenly changed. He sank back into his half-drivelling self. "Oh, she ain't gwine to say nothin' to me, Marse Hen. She ain't gwine to say no more than Miss Nelly there says to you when you gets this way. What does she say to you?"

"She doesn't say anything to me. She has no occasion to do so."

Jeams twisted his head to one side and burst into a drunken laugh. "Oh! Yes, she do. I've done heard her. Eliza, she regalates me, and Miss Nelly, she

regalates you, an' I reckon we both knows it, and we better know it, too."

And this was the fact. As usual, Jeams had struck the mark.

As for John Marvel, he remained the same old John—plodding, quiet, persistent, patient, zealous, cheery and self-sacrificing, working among the poor with an unfaltering trust in human nature which no shocks could shake, because deep down in the untroubled depths of his soul lay an unfaltering trust in the Divine Goodness and wisdom of God. He had been called to a larger and quite important church, but after a few days of consideration he, against the earnest wishes and advice of his friends, myself among them, declined the call. He assigned among other reasons the fact that he was expected to work to pay off the debt for which the church was somewhat noted, and he knew nothing about business, his duty was to preach the gospel, but when friends made it plain that the debt would be taken care of if he became the rector, he still shook his head. His work was among the poor and he could not leave them.

My wife and I went out to his church the Sunday evening following his decision, and as we strolled along through the well-known squalid streets, I could not help expressing my disappointment that after all our work he should have rejected the offer.

"He is really the most unpractical man on earth," I fumed. "Here we have gotten him a good call to a church that many a man would jump at, and when he

finds a difficulty in the way, we work until we have removed it and yet he rejects it. He will remain an assistant to the end of his days." My wife made no reply, a sure sign that she did not agree with me, but did not care to discuss the matter. It is her most effective method of refuting me.

When we arrived we found the little church packed to suffocation and men on the outside leaning in at the windows. Among them I recognized the tall form of my old Drummer. As we joined the group, John Marvel's voice, clear and strong, came floating out through the open windows.

He was giving out a hymn.

> "One sweetly solemn thought
> Comes to me o'er and o'er:
> I am nearer home to-day
> Than I ever have been before."

The whole congregation joined in, those without the church as well as those who were within.

As I heard the deep bass of the old Drummer, rolling in a low, solemn undertone, a sudden shifting of the scene came to me. I was in a great auditorium filled with light, and packed with humanity rising tier on tier and stretching far back till lost in the maze of distances. A grand orchestra, banked before me, with swaying arms and earnest faces, played a wonderful harmony which rolled about me like the sea and whelmed me with its volume till I was almost swept away by the tide, then suddenly down under its sweep I

found the low deep roll of the bass drum. No one appeared to mark it or paid any heed to him. Nor did the big Drummer pay any heed to the audience. All he minded was the harmony and his drum. But I knew that, unmarked and unheeded, it set athrob the pulsing air and stirred the billows through which all that divine music reached and held the soul.

As we walked home that night after pressing our way into the throng of poor people to wring John Marvel's hand, I said to my wife after a struggle with myself to say it:

"I think I was wrong about John, and you were right. He did right. He is well named the Assistant."

My wife said simply: "I feel that I owe him more than I can say." She slipped her hand in my arm, and a warm feeling for all mankind surged about my heart.

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